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High over London, a lone jet fighter traces its path across the cloudless sky, and men and children stop for a moment to look. From his vantage point 40,000 feet above them, the pilot sees, through his canopy of ' Perspex ', the English Channel and the coastline of France curving away into the distance. For many years now, transparent 'Perspex' has been used to make windows, canopies and blisters for aircraft, because it is light, easy to mould and unaffected by weather

White trail

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Thus, and in a thousand kindred ways, I.C.I.'s research and production are serving the Nation.

ICI

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Design

A national showroom

TO PROVIDE A NATIONAL DISPLAY of well designed goods was one of the original instructions to the Council of Industrial Design. The announcement of the Haymarket site in the heart of London's West End and of the opening early next year for a Design Centre for British industries brings this imaginative project a stage nearer.

It may seem to some critics that the Council has been making haste pretty slowly to have taken ten years to plan a permanent, changing exhibition of British manufactures. To others, viewing the apparent paucity of good design at the average trade fair, the whole idea may still seem premature. But to those who have lived with this problem, the time seems well chosen for this great experiment – for it is a great experiment.

No other country has attempted a continuous, changing, selective exhibition covering such a range of durable consumer goods, an exhibition moreover which must be financed up to half its running costs by industry itself. Manufacturers are well used to paying for space at trade fairs to show goods of their own choice. They are by now fairly well accustomed to lending products for periodical prestige displays and to leaving the selection in the Council's hands. But the time has come to carry the principle a stage further by asking manufacturers to contribute to the cost of a selective exhibition on a first rate West End site.

Ten, even five, years ago, the Council would not have contemplated such an experiment. Not only was there comparatively little that would merit exhibition in a national showroom, but manufacturers were not enough convinced of the importance of design as a selling factor to accept the principle of a selective shop window.

Today things are very different. Such strides in design have been made in so many industries that a really creditable display should be stageable all the year round. Following ten years of temporary exhibitions from 'Britain Can Make It' in 1946, through the Festival displays in 1951, to the current series of overseas prestige shows organised by the Council for the Board of Trade, many manufacturers have been increasingly won over to the idea of independent selections. And, most important consideration of all, the urgent need for Britain to expand her export trade in merchandise of real quality at all price levels makes this the right moment to be planning a Design Centre for British Industries that will become a port of call for all buyers visiting London.

POINTS and POINTERS

INTERNATIONAL TALKING POINT Aspen, a small one-time mining town high up in the mountains of Colorado, is once again to be the meeting place for architects, designers and writers. The International Design Conference is to be held from June 13–18 to consider its theme: 'Crossroads – what are the directions of the arts?' The programme outline explains that de-designers are deeply concerned about recent tendencies in design philosophy. The concepts of Functionalism, Neo-classicism and Humanism will come up for a thorough review; but the Conference will also discuss practical questions; for example: "Are new technological means and scientific thoughts demanding a new direction for design?"

Over a period of five days the theme will be thrashed out by panel speakers and the audience under the following heads: 'Communication', 'Light and Structure', 'City and Landscape', 'Education' and 'Leisure'. Most of the speakers are American and among those invited are Walter Gropius, Lewis Mumford, Herbert Bayer, Margaret Mead and Charles Eames. Guest contributors to the discussions from other countries are Luigi Nervi (Italy), Wilhelm Wagenfeld (Germany), Sokyu Ueda and Teimoshuke Kinugasa (Japan), Carlos Lazo (Mexico), Lance L. Whyte and Michael Farr (England).

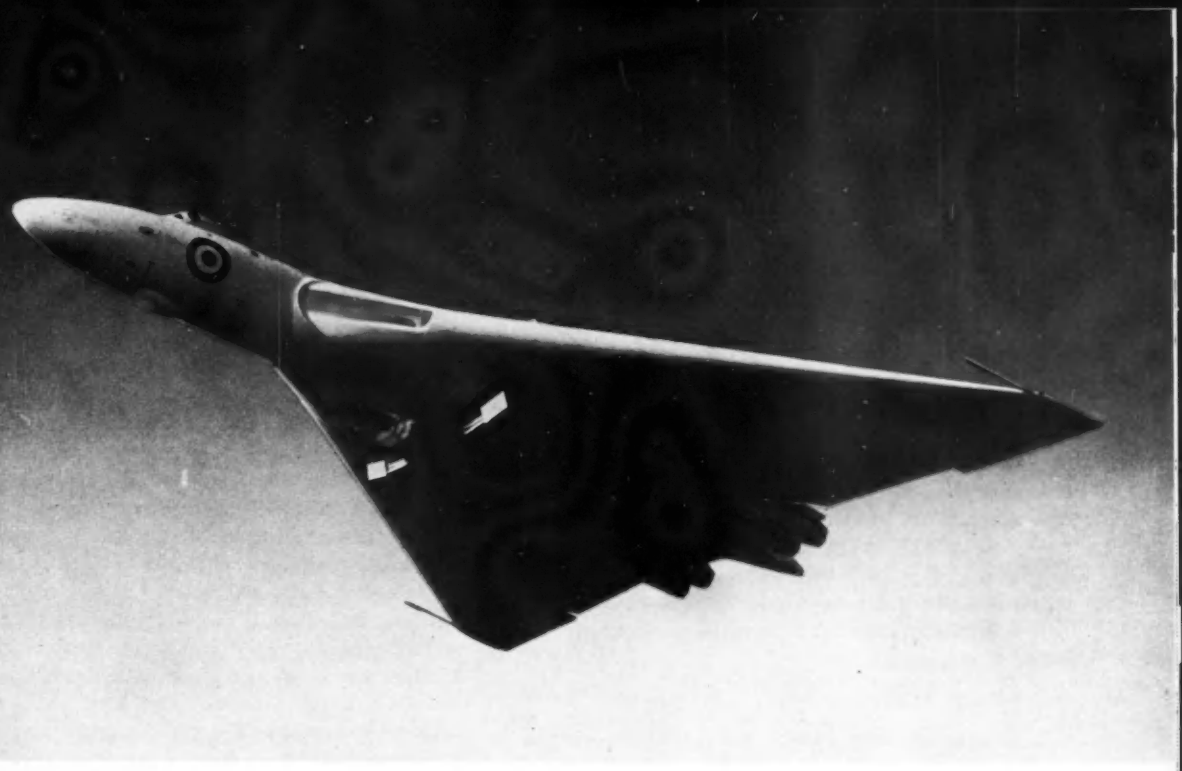
BRITISH IN BELGIUM Now on view at the British Embassy in Brussels is a display of well-designed English crystal glassware selected for its appeal to the Belgian market. This idea of focusing attention on good British designs in a foreign market is a development from last year's display of products at the Embassy, which was transferred direct from the Board of Trade stand at the Brussels International Fair. Both displays were selected from 'Design Review' by the CoID, which is again responsible for choosing a small group of pieces on show at the Fair until May 8.

An impression of the official British exhibit at the International Samples Fair which closed in Milan on April 27. A Board of Trade inquiry counter was the focal point of the stand which consisted entirely of textiles draped in long shallow loops from five vertical booms. More than 150 fabrics were selected by Hans Juda, editor of 'The Ambassador', Rosemary Cooper, editor of 'British Vogue Export Book' and Hulme Chadwick, the designer of the stand. The Board of Trade will also be represented at the trade fairs in Gothenberg (May 14–22) and Toronto (May 30–June 10).

ON PATRONAGE "No business could long indulge in an indiscriminate scattering of its profits among the arts." So spoke F. C. Hooper, managing director of Schweppes Ltd, at a recent meeting of the Royal Society of Arts. Mr Hooper was discussing 'Business as Patron of the Arts in the Industrial Age', and his statement was soon qualified by the view that the field of industrial and commercial art provides "a not inconsiderable income for the successful artists who accept its discipline". But that was all Mr Hooper had to say on that side of the subject – a disappointment to admirers of the Lewitt-Him Schweppes labels and advertisements – and he devoted the rest of his paper to industrial patronage of the fine arts.

Mr Hooper's novel suggestion was directed at those who spend, he estimated, £30 m in a year on 'prestige' advertising to attract the influential minority, "the leadership group"; people interested in and accustomed to handle ideas. Mr Hooper proposed that a portion of this vast sum should be used for patronising artists, musicians, poets, painters and sculptors. A reasonable income derived in this way for society's striving creative spirits would undoubtedly be welcome.

H 55 Not the sign of yet another brand of hydrogen bomb, but a reminder that the important Swedish design exhibition, 'H 55', is to open at Helsingborg on June 10. The British flat in the international section will be featured in the next DESIGN.



Avro 'Vulcan'

SPACE FOR DECORATION

John E Blake

There are signs today of a growing desire for more decoration in architecture and design. Can we say what is good or bad decoration? Is there a modern idiom on which a standard of criticism can be based? What are the problems which face the designers, whose task it is to develop the decorative forms of the future? These questions and others are discussed in the following article which attempts to find a common theme as the basis for most of our modern decoration. Typical examples of decoration on a variety of different industries are illustrated.

WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT the urge to decorate and enrich the familiar objects of everyday life has been fundamental to the growth of our civilisation. The familiar theory of change in developing societies which has often been used to account for our present hankering after ornament – Doric, Ionic, Corinthian; Early English, Decorated, Perpendicular; High Renaissance, Mannerist, Baroque; Bauhaus modern, 'contemporary' and where next? – is useful in putting into perspective our present predicament; in showing that it is by no means unique. But it does little to help establish a recognisable idiom of modern decorative forms; it does little to extract from the welter of conflicting ideas a single theme of which it can be said "this is the true path". Indeed such statements can hardly be made without grave misgivings, for who knows what generations hence will select as truly expressive of our age. All the theory can do is to warn against the dangers of a resurrected past.

Decoration today

The fact remains, however, that today there is a clear reaction against the purist austerity of the early years of the Modern Movement, and the enforced austerity of the second World War and its aftermath. All around us are signs of a desire for a richer life, for an environment which excites and flatters the senses. New buildings have tiles to decorate walls inside and out and panels of colour in repeating rhythms; furniture has coloured or decorated doors; wallpapers and textiles, already tired of the small repeating motif, are reaching out for bigger, bolder patterns; motor cars, not content with newly found shapes, sensible and pleasing in themselves, crowd on chromium plate in ever more lavish displays; domestic equipment, following the motor car's lead, adds ornate handles and glossy embellishments of all kinds. What it all adds up to is anybody's guess; a new Corinthian, a new Perpendicular, a new Baroque? – undoubtedly. But in vain one searches for a consistent style which is a recognisable expression of a logical trend. In vain one attempts to discover the link between a modern floral textile and the speed lines on a car, or the dour gloom of the younger 'realist' painters and the slick plastic symbols on a refrigerator.

The link is so obvious in other periods that it goes unquestioned. The same shapes recur in a Baroque cornice, a wall hanging, the carvings on a carriage, cutlery and tableware, dress textiles and jewellery. They appear as intrinsic aspects of a way of life which is guided by a single purpose and co-ordinated by a common belief.

Spirit of the age

That this underlying sense of order is apparent in most highly developed societies seems a good enough reason for supposing that it is not absent in our own. If we cannot discover its essence immediately it is perhaps because we are too close in time to see it in relation to general social trends. Yet if we are to attempt an assessment at all of recent decorative forms, to try to distinguish the good from the bad, to try to establish in our own minds what is appropriate for one thing but unsuitable elsewhere, then we must attempt to sift and distil from the countless manifestations of modern thought the basic elements which make up the spirit and driving force of the age. Just as one can sense the sorcery and magic in the fierce carvings of some American Indian tribes, or detect in the flying arches and soaring spires of Gloucester and Salisbury cathedrals, whose airy structures defy the very nature of stone, the urge to rise above the baser human passions, so in this age must there be some universal principle, some guiding force which captures our imaginations and drives us forward.

Most decoration in the past has been based on relatively few themes which have recurred and have been modified as society has evolved. Religious symbols, symbols of fertility, representations of the successful hunt, of conquest or valour, expressions of magic or unknown evils, nature herself seen as an expression of humility and virtue, all at varying times have provided the theme to which the decoration of a particular society has been related.

Cubist origins

Today it is perhaps in a new conception and understanding of space that we are finding a fresh inspiration for our decorative forms. "The method of presenting spatial relationships which the cubists developed has furnished the plastic principles of present-day visual approach", wrote Giedion in 1941.* And again, referring to cubist paintings: "It is not the 'abstract', it is not the 'cubical', which are significant in their content. What is decisive is the invention of a new approach, of a new spatial representation, and the means by which it is attained." But the popular decorators of the 'twenties misunderstood the meaning of cubism. They saw in the superficial appearance of its geometric structure an easy source of reference for a type of lumpy, angular ornament that had

*Sigfried Giedion, '*Space, Time and Architecture*'.

nothing to do with the problems which the cubist painters were trying to solve.

The principles which governed the work of Picasso, Braque, Mondrian and Boccione were re-created in the designs of Corbusier, Mies Van der Rohe and Gropius and have since become the basis for much that is best in modern design and architecture. Thus in our search for lightness of structure in our new furniture and buildings we are developing a common understanding of the cubist idea. As with the cubists, space is a positive rather than a negative element in design today. It is not enough for the architect that space should be thrust aside, pushed out and away from his building, isolated from it like an epidemic disease. Rather does the skeleton structure of the building itself reach out to catch and enclose space, to invite it in, to retain it merely by a sheet of glass or an open screen, to define its properties but not to restrict its freedom. Such light and airy structures delicately poised on stilts are repeated in our furniture and our 'space frame' display units with their thin metal supports, often painted black to emphasise their thinness.

Space conception

The fact that this space sense has spread so widely from its rarefied beginnings in a Paris studio before the first World War, is no accident or whim of fashion. Ideas which can claim such universal subscription are seldom isolated in one sphere of activity. They seem far more likely to be an expression of some general movement, one aspect of a modern space concept which affects our lives in many different ways. For space has today a romantic appeal of vast and growing significance. The realisation that there are worlds so much greater than our own, distances more extensive than our minds can immediately comprehend, systems of evolution which make our own span of life on earth appear a minute cog in a mammoth machine, has filled the dreams of young and old alike. The discovery that science, in revealing these things to us, has in fact disclosed fresh mysteries every bit as baffling and disturbing as the dark evils which the totem poles dispel, has jolted our complacency and given us a

1

Decoration - Past and Present

These two pieces of furniture show fundamental differences in their treatment of decoration.

1 In the Baroque table the structure itself is carved so that the function of the rails and legs is largely disguised. The type of decoration is an organic evolution from centuries of classical thought.

2 In the modern storage unit the structural framework is important as pure structure and is as light and unobtrusive as possible. It is, therefore, the spaces between the framework which are decorated. As there is no tradition on which decoration of this type can be based, many varied experiments are being made. Hence the photoprint decoration of tree-sections in this unit by Terence Conran.

2

new force against which our strength must be tested.

These problems provide a substantial, growing element in popular journalism and fiction. Films, plays, stories, broadcasts are devoted to the exploits of 'space men', so that, almost without realising it, we are witnesses to the growth of a new mythology comparable to that of ancient Greece. Unlike the Greeks, however, we know that today our stories are based on a foundation of fact and are supported by front page accounts in the newspapers of the fastest aircraft, the most powerful rocket, or the ominous 'unidentified object' in the sky. We can expect to find, therefore, that the influence of this new mythology is becoming increasingly apparent in the form of 'space decoration' in all sorts of objects with which we surround ourselves. It is not enough, apparently, that the instruments on a motor car dashboard should register the behaviour of the various parts of a car clearly and simply. Indeed the dashboards of many new, particularly American, cars look, and are obviously intended to look, as though they would control nothing less than a spaceship.

Likewise the most commonplace of mechanical devices in the home – clocks, radios or cookers – are beginning to vie with each other in the extent to which they satisfy a popular taste for the 'romance of science'. And the more dials and controls we possess, the more apparently we can identify ourselves with our space heroes, the more we can bring this romantic world of science into our homes.

3

4

5

Three-dimensional effects

Apart from this symbolic expression of space in decoration, there is a new interest in actual or illusory depth within a picture frame. The new attraction of stereoscopic cinema (even though the principle was known to our grandfathers); the delight in the spatial settings of Messell, Tanya Moisewitch or Mottley; the invitation into the deep gloom of an Ivon Hitchin's wood; the infinity of a Dali plain; or the ravishing mystery of the enchanted forest which formed the climax of the recent Diaghilev exhibition; these things, if not new in conception, have for us a special fascination. Closely related to them are new types of three-dimensional decoration – wall panels composed of several layers of engraved glass, symbols such as the incongruous coats of arms used by some motor and domestic equipment manufacturers, souvenirs

6

Space and cubism

3 The analysis and dissection of space in the work of cubist painters was the beginning of our modern space concept which inspires much of present-day ornament. 'Portrait of Stravinsky' by Albert Gleizes from a recent exhibition at Marlborough Fine Art Ltd.

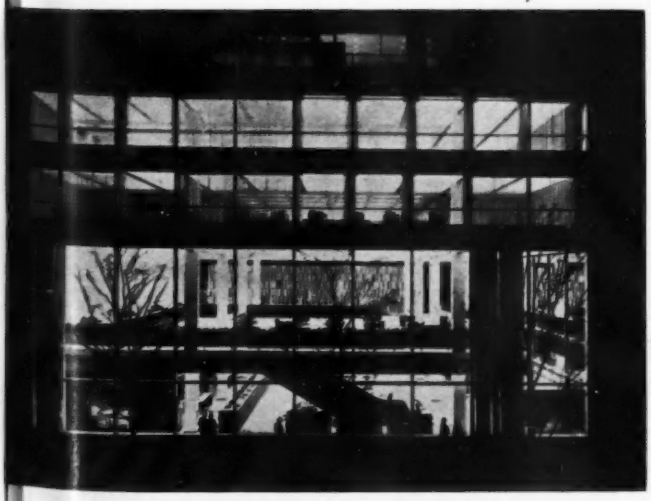
4 Cubism misunderstood. The superficial characteristics of cubist painting were extracted and used as ornament on many products such as this during the 'twenties and 'thirties.

5 Cubism understood. The definition of space with thin structures and flat planes can be seen in this chair by Le Corbusier and is a logical development of the cubist idea.

6 The emphatic concentration on severe structures in this group of furniture designed by Paul McCobb, suggests that there can be little further development in this direction without the use of some form of decoration.

7 A modern building in which the skeleton structure alone defines its limits and the glass walls suggest only an illusive division of space. Office of the Manufacturers' Trust Co in New York. Architects Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.

8 The poise and lightness of the Trust Co office is carried further in the thin intersecting members of this sculptured screen by Harry Bertoia which stretches along one wall.



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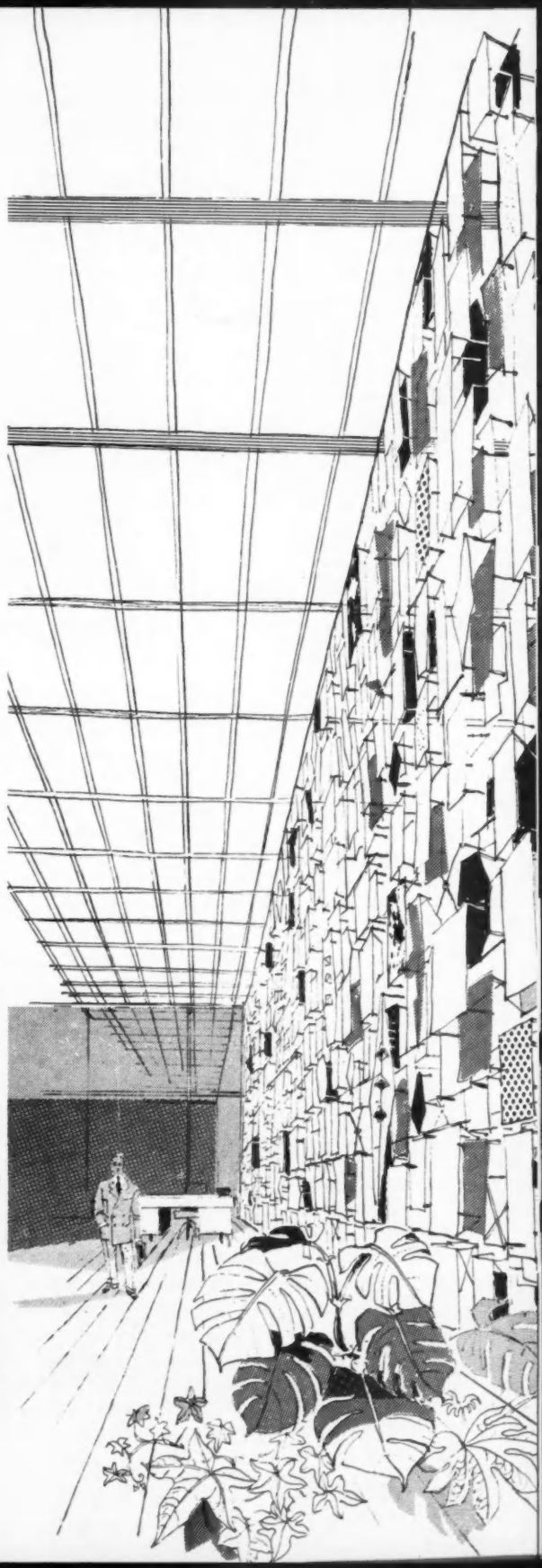

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and fancy goods of various types using transparent, coloured and metallised plastics. Many of these differ from the more familiar forms of bas-relief in the quality of illusion, in the puzzle of apparent or actual depth under a flat or often dome shaped transparent surface – the recurring 'astral dome' of science fiction.

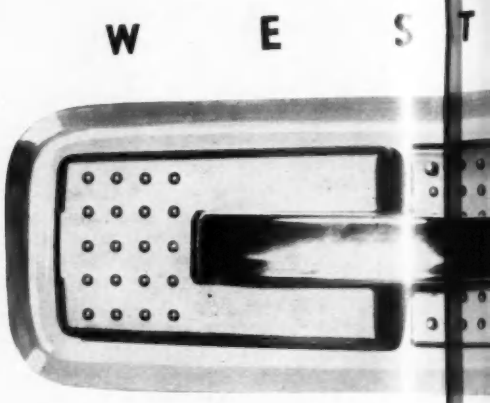
So far we have been able to point to two factors in the contemporary scene which are significant to design. Firstly, the trend towards more decoration is established and is a logical evolution from the beginnings of the Modern Movement. Secondly, a modern space concept appears to be the common basis which is affecting the character of the various new types of ornament which are being developed. If we accept these factors, can we go further in our attempt to find a universal standard by which we can assess the value of contemporary decoration? Can we, in fact, apply the age-old aesthetic standards which have distinguished great art of the past, or must we find some new yardstick? Are there dangers which must be avoided; avenues still to be explored?

Change for the sake of change

Before we can attempt to answer these questions we must consider the implications of large scale production, particularly in the engineering industries where tooling costs are high. With the craft production methods of the past, where each product was unique or part of a small batch, there was no question of finding the right type of ornament for a particular form. Thus the ornate Corinthian column was never applied to a temple of Doric proportions, neither were the carvings of a Louis XIV cabinet considered separately from its general shape, as embellishments to be applied afterwards. Often today, however, new ornament is applied annually to forms which remain basically unchanged over a number of years; a new switch on a cooker, a new handle on a refrigerator, a new radiator grille on a motor car, change for the sake of change, a new face for an old product. The pattern of this development, which is already prevalent in the U S A, is becoming apparent in this country as competition for the domestic luxuries grows. The shopkeeper demands it because it provides him with something to show in his window which he can claim as 'new'. The manufacturer welcomes it because he can also claim to be producing a new model and he is saved the expense of retooling the costly basic parts. The man in the

Three-dimensional ornament

9 Space in wall decoration. This mural panel from the S S 'Southern Cross' is one of several similar examples which are becoming popular today. It is made up of seven layers of engraved 'Perspex', but the three-dimensional effect is not well illustrated by the photograph. Designed by Arthur Fleischmann.

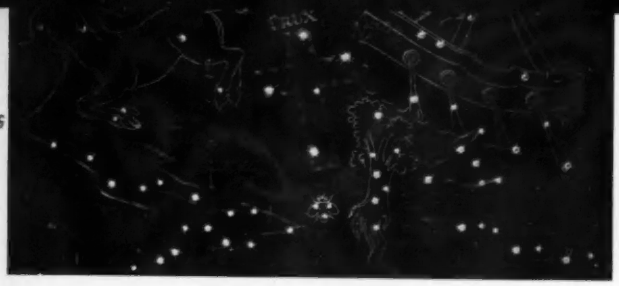


10 This Coronation souvenir is an example of a type of three-dimensional decoration which is being used increasingly on various types of equipment. A lens of clear acrylic is formed over a die, which leaves an impression on the rear face. A coating of metal is electro-deposited in the impression, giving an effect from the front of a solid metal pattern covered with clear plastic. Designed by H. Rann Boyce for Wilmot Breeden Ltd.

11 and **12** Similar types of ornament can be seen on this wheel hub and car grille. But while a coat of arms is appropriate for a Coronation souvenir, it hardly seems suitable for a modern car, for its attempt to create an impression of antique authenticity hopelessly conflicts with other types of car ornament.

13 This piece of ornament, each side of the rear window of an American car, seems to have little relevance in its context. The background texture is of bright chrome and merely adds to the general glitter. *Ford.*

14 The plastic decoration on this refrigerator lacks subtlety and is not helped by the unsuitable crown and the crude 'F' of the trade-mark. This type of decoration nevertheless has fascinating qualities and is ripe for further development. Frigidaire.



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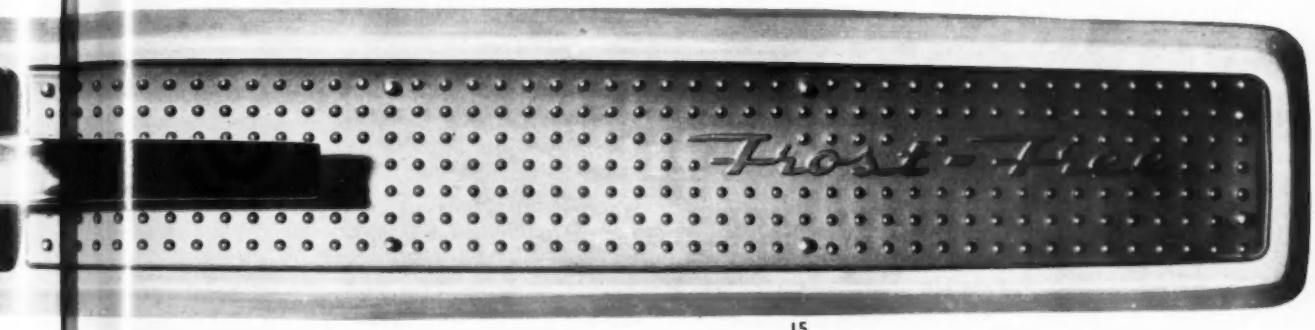
15 This refrigerator handle and backplate are effective in the treatment of a large area. The three-dimensional small dot pattern is in pale blue plastic, which goes well with the white door and chromium handle. Of particular interest is the subtle shape of the panel with its slightly curved upper and lower edges, which serve the same purpose as entasis on Greek columns. The letter spacing of the nameplate detracts however from the quality of the design. *Westinghouse.*

S T I N G H O U S E



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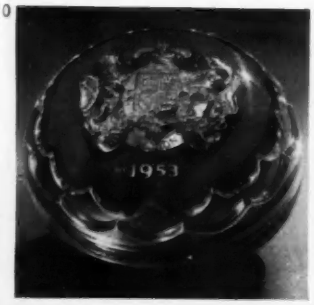

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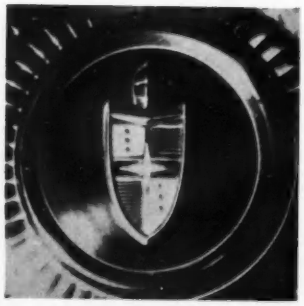

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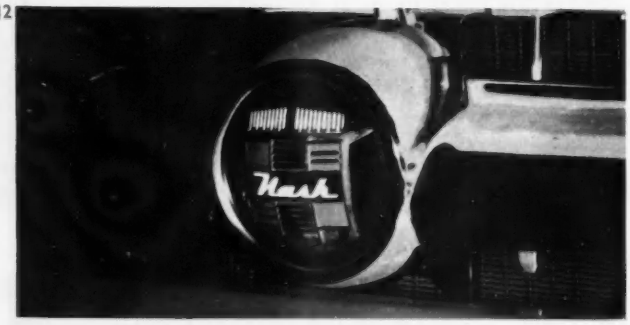

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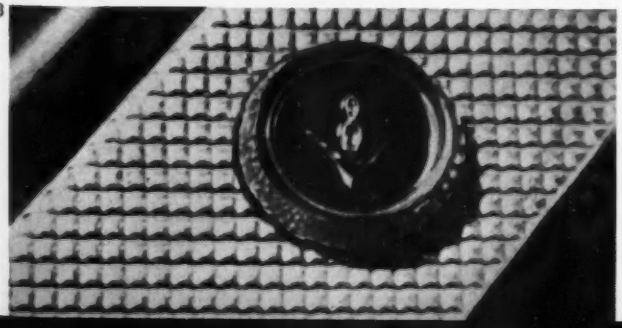

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16 The Westinghouse refrigerator trademark makes its point clearly and simply. The device is small (about 1½ inches in diameter) but is well proportioned and neatly finished.

14

street, if not completely taken in by it, is gullible to the extent that he is proud to be the possessor of the most up-to-date, the most modern, the most expressive of progress in science and industry. Thus we have a spiral in which most appear satisfied, yet the results often fall sadly short of the best that human imagination could devise.

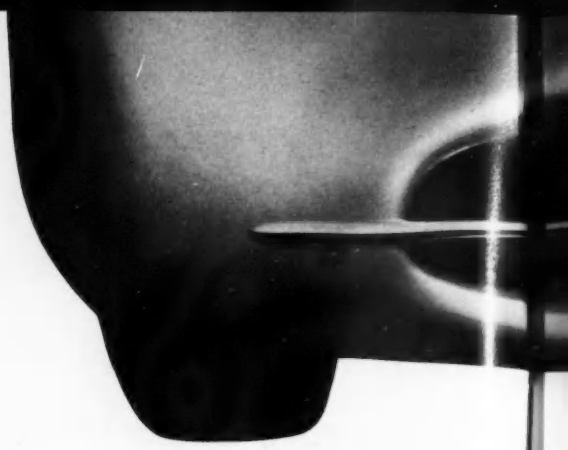
Problem of unity

There is clearly a limit to the extent to which a product can be 'developed' in this way. There are also dangerous and difficult problems which are implicit in the method. One or two leading makes of motor cars, for example, are normally designed so that all their parts relate to form a visual unity. If prominent features of the design are altered then that original unity is disturbed. Sometimes real improvements are made though the tendency is to add to the quantity of applied decoration – to provide extra glitter for the showroom window where the product must compete with that of a rival firm. As more ornament is added the sense of scale is destroyed and an element of coarseness and vulgarity creeps in.

Not only individual models are affected. A whole industry may arrive at a common solution to a problem in which no fundamental changes may be required for many years. The slab sided car form which was developed soon after the war is now so firmly established in the U S A that American firms, in their efforts to provide something new each year, build in larger and more ornate grilles, fatter bumpers, more intricate decoration round windows, false exhaust pipes, speed lines, arrows, darts, imitation jet motors, tail planes and every known symbol of speed and power. So the cycle goes on until a new form is evolved, a different type of machine perhaps, which can begin its career as the conception and expression of a single mind.

American view

This then gives us the practical commercial background from which much of our decoration springs. But if the majority of products which have been victims of this spiral have provided apt illustrations of its dangers, there seems no reason for supposing that it is fundamentally bad. Indeed it seems more likely that it is an intrinsic condition of modern industry which must be accepted and turned to advantage. One well known American design



Symbols of speed

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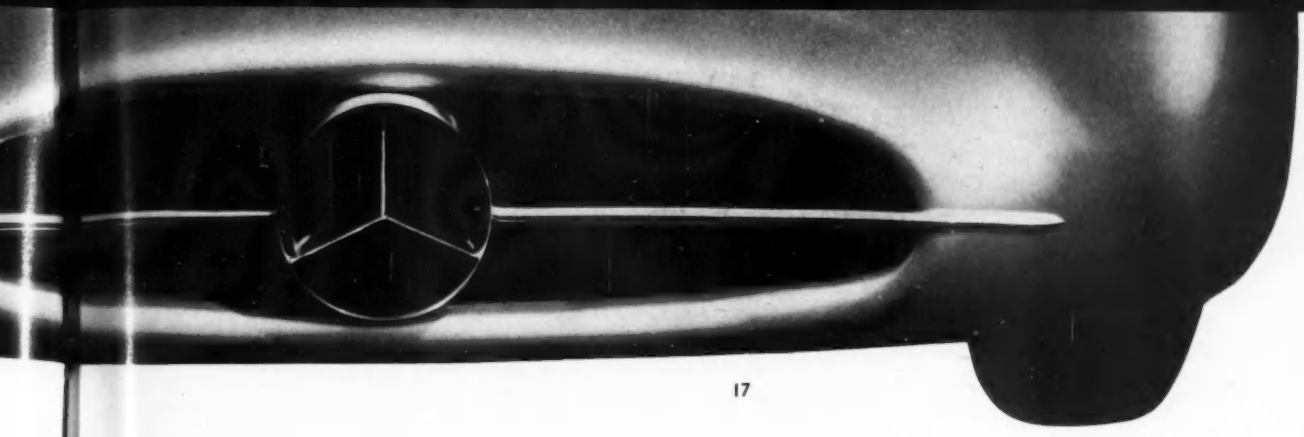

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17 and **18** Aircraft forms are constantly recurring features in modern decoration. A head-on view of an aeroplane is symbolised in both these designs used on the fronts of motor cars. Compare the restrained and delicate example on the Mercedes-Benz, above, with the heavy, over-realistic version on the Pontiac, right.

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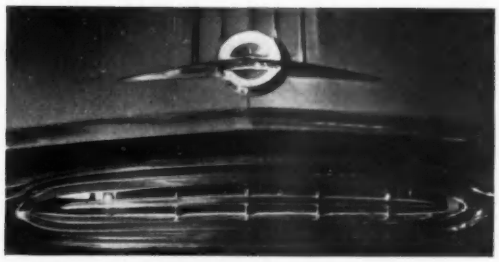
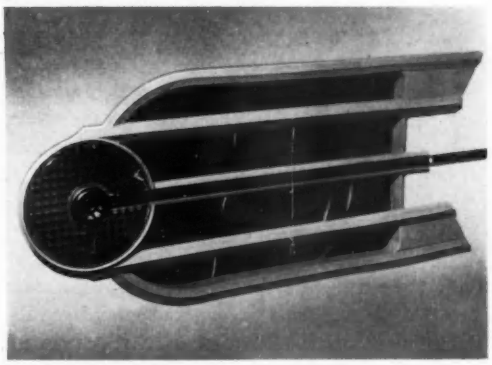


19 and **20** Bosses on the front bumpers of two American cars are designed to resemble aircraft engine cowlings. Their use as decoration may be legitimate, but they look crude when of such a massive size and when combined with so much other heavy chromium plate.

21 A symbol of speed may be suitable for a car but is out of place on a static object. This comet-like design 'decorates' the air-intake of an American deep-freezer. Westinghouse.

22 and **23** The most common of speed symbols is the chromium streak. But compare the fat, lumpy additions on the Mercury, **22**, with the delicate lines of the Aston Martin, **23**.

21



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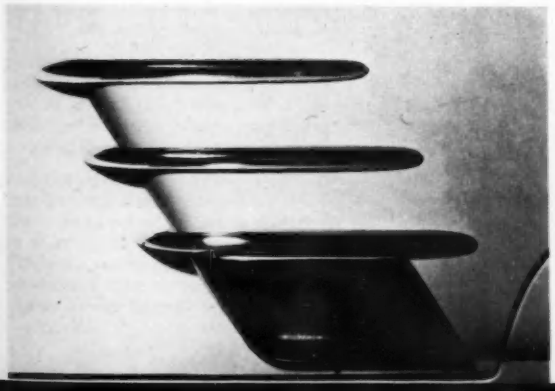

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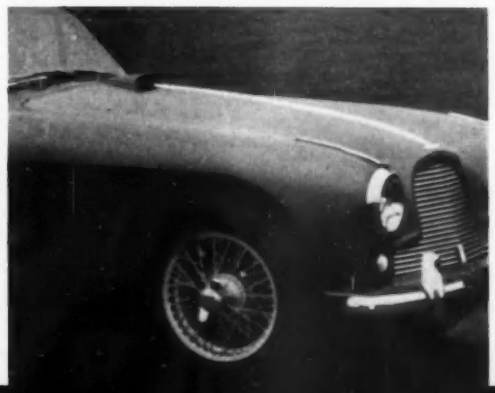

organisation claims, in fact, that the decoration on the refrigerators which it has designed for the Westinghouse Electric Corporation are "part of a long-range design progression programme". This probably provides the clue to the problem, for it is the haphazard, ill-considered changes made without previous thought which produce such unsuccessful, often coarse results. Certainly the achievements of the designers mentioned above provide an example of the excellent results that can be obtained by careful forward planning, imagination and a good eye for refinement of detail and finish.

Purpose misunderstood

How can we judge what is good and bad? This is a difficult and complex question. In accepting our modern expression of space we are in danger of following in the footsteps of the pseudo cubists of the 'twenties, we are in danger of mistaking the outward appearance for the essence. A brief glance at some of the illustrations here will show the varieties of space symbols that adorn some modern American cars. Yet surely it is the feeling of spaciousness, the lightness, the poise which is lacking and which is most expressive of our desire for freedom in space. The swelling bumpers, the heavy bosses, the flared tails are close copies of aircraft or rocket forms, yet they do not express adequately the spirit or the romance of the age, as they so obviously set out to do. The 1953 Studebaker, designed by Raymond Loewy, has perhaps arrived at a point nearest to this conception. Yet the subtle, elegant proportions of the original model have been destroyed in later versions by the addition of heavier chromium trimmings.

Similarly, dashboards and, by derivation, cooker control panels, clocks and similar equipment provide the most obvious examples of the modern 'spaceship idiom'. The recessed dials, angular lettering, the streaked chromium relief or pressed-out trellis patterns are there – certainly not because they are necessary, or indeed desirable from the point of view of easy dial reading – but because they satisfy the yearnings of a romantic age. Again one sees the old danger of the immediate post-cubist period recurring in a different form. The designer's problem is to convey to the user a sense of confidence in the precision and accuracy of the various controls and dials. The panel is therefore embellished with forms suggesting this precision –

continued on page 23

Symbols of power

24 Air intakes, with their close associations with jet engines, are introduced on cars to express power – hence the over-large radiator grilles of many modern cars such as this. Cadillac.

25 Not content with the radiator grille itself the designers of this car have built in chromium imitations of twin jet motors. Oldsmobile.

26 This car is a fascinating example of the lengths to which some American designers will go to express the idea of speed and power. Compare this 'tail-plane' and its imitation twin jet exhausts, containing the rear lights, with the Avro 'Vulcan' illustrated on page 9.

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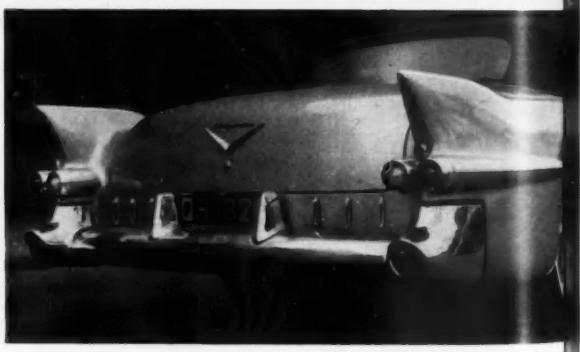

27 Many car designers would apparently like us to imagine that there is an engine in the boot as well as under the bonnet, for the introduction of false air intakes just forward of the rear wheels is common in American cars. This Cadillac also has false ventilator louvres such as are frequently used in the bonnets of racing and sports cars. Compare these with the functional air outlets of the Mercedes-Benz, **28**.

29 Just as air intakes on cars are given special prominence, so are exhaust outlets. This pretentious battery of 'exhaust' pipes really houses a harmless array of rear lights. Hudson 'Italia'.

30 If cars are to continue to be inspired by aircraft forms, would it not, perhaps, be better to make the car body itself resemble an aeroplane rather than to apply a host of symbolic ornament? This seems to have been the underlying idea in this experimental Italian design for Lincoln-Mercury.

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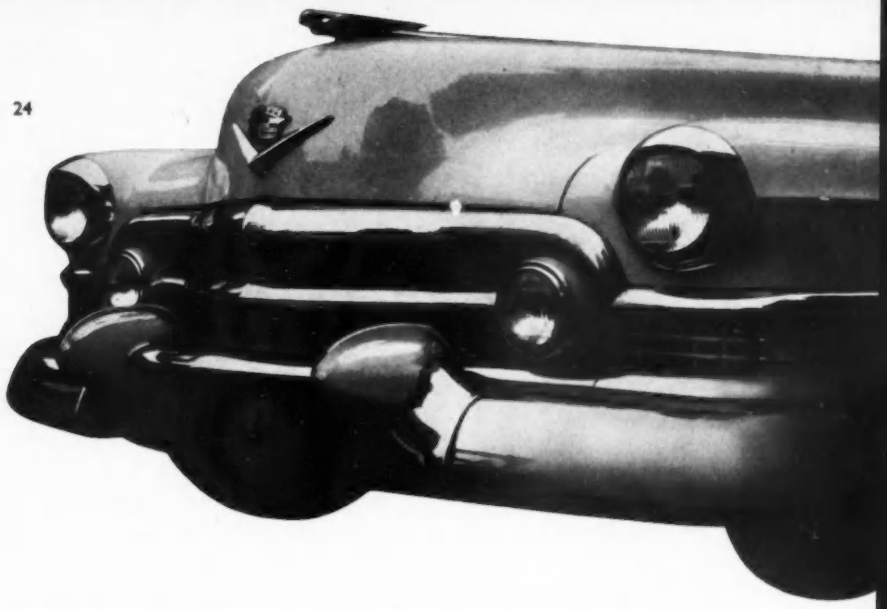

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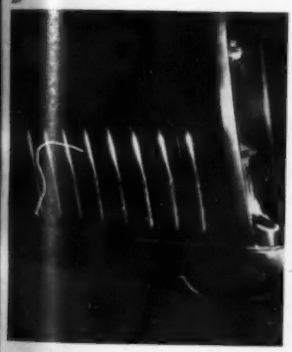

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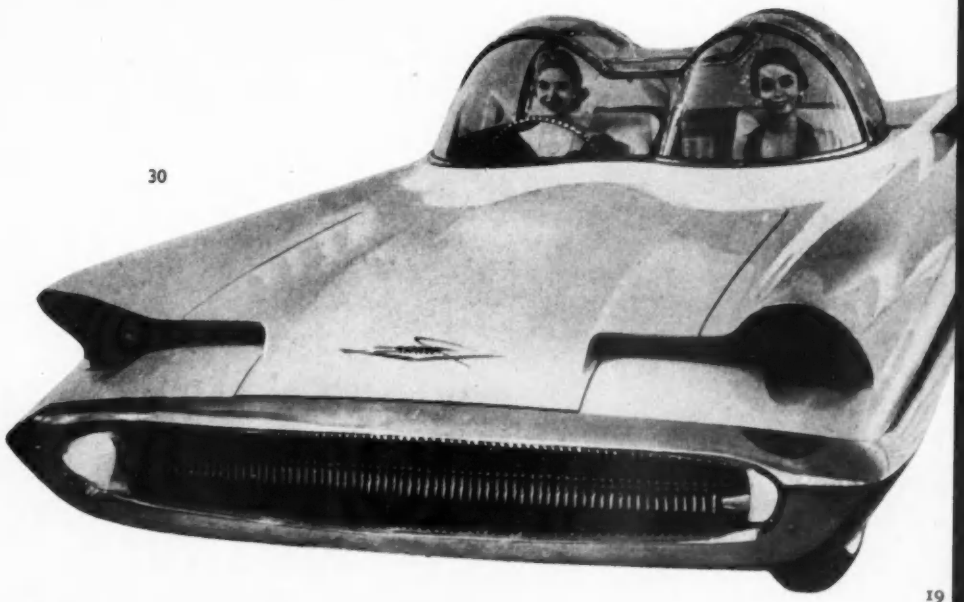
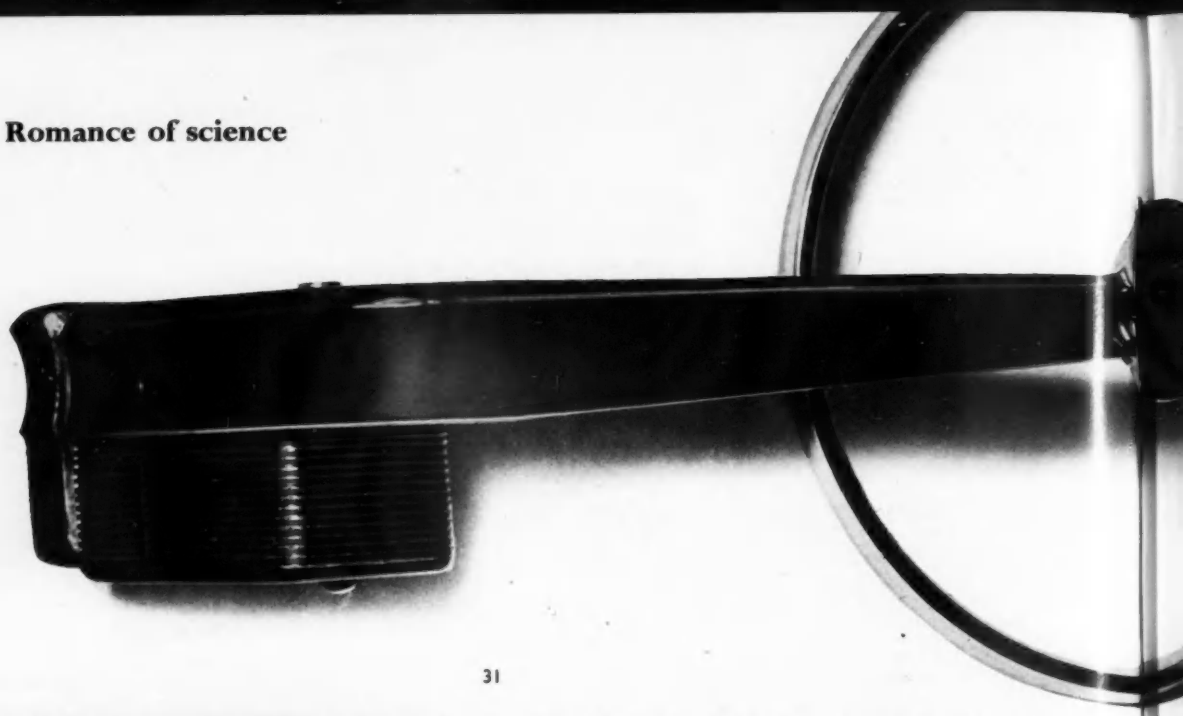


Romance of science



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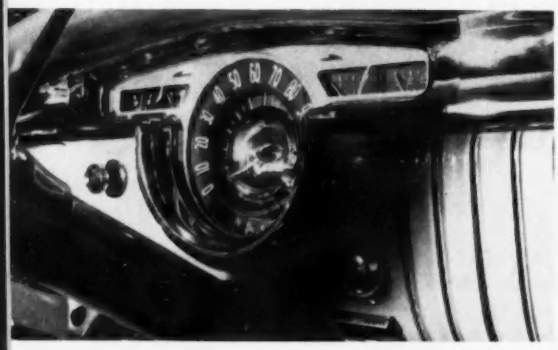

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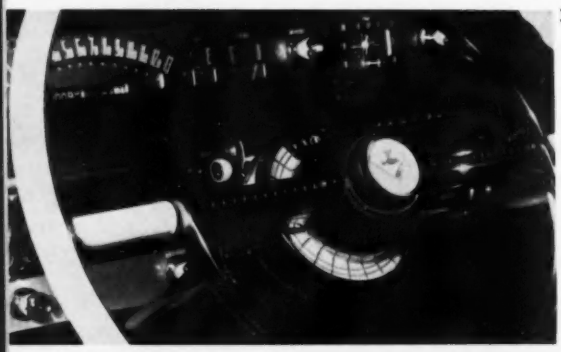

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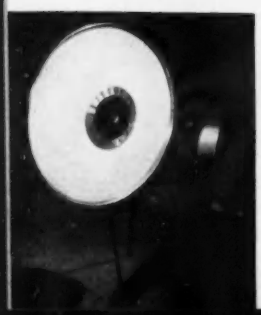

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31 The use of concentric circles is a recurring motif in modern decoration. It could symbolise the construction of the atom, a radar device or, maybe, a 'flying saucer'. But in any case it has strong associations with a romantic conception of science. The illustration shows a handle on an American refrigerator. Frigidaire.

32 On instrument dials concentric circles are often used one behind the other to give an impression of complexity. This expresses the modern fascination for three-dimensional effects. On the example shown here from an American car dashboard the depth is emphasised further by the projecting chromium strip. Oldsmobile.

33 Another use of the concentric circle motif can be seen in this steering wheel. Every additional dial and control adds to the impression that the car has powers akin to a space ship. With the imitation dial on the steering wheel hub the driver can pretend that the car is being driven on instruments alone.

34 Front and back views of a semi-spherical radio cabinet, a prototype designed by Jon W. Hauser, U S A. Here the design seems to have strong associations with radar equipment.

35 and **36** These American clocks both show clearly the influence of popular science. The example left, designed by George Nelson for the Howard Miller Clock Co, incorporates a blown plastic 'astral dome'. The appropriately named 'Celestial' clock designed by Mac Tornguist for The Sessions Clock Co, right, has a plastic ring surrounding the dial – symbol of a radar scanning aerial.

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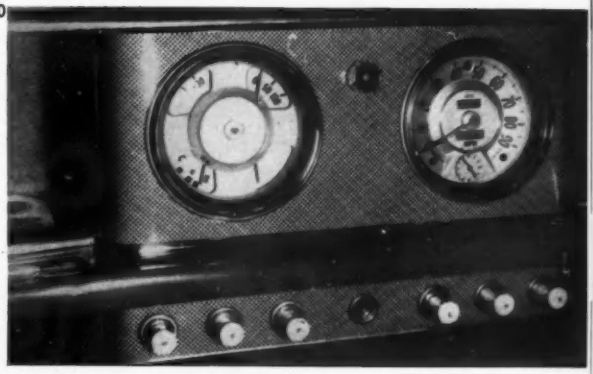

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Precision in ornament

37 Confidence in the accuracy of instruments and other mechanical devices can be expressed in precise detailing and finish. This sense of precision is often difficult to achieve in chromium plated pressed metal, which like stage jewellery glitters from afar but does not stand up to close inspection. The reflections from this dashboard are confusing and clear reading of the dials is not helped by the chunky numerals.

38 In contrast the machine-like finish of the controls and decoration on this stainless steel strongroom door would leave little doubt of its efficiency. Though financially impractical for mass production this example suggests that other materials than chromium plate could better express the sense of precision needed on dashboards. Designed by Henry Dreyfuss for The Mosler Safe Co.

39 Not a dashboard, but the control panel of an American cooker. The shiny decoration in conjunction with dials and controls is, for the unwary, a persuasive indication of scientific 'wonders'.

40 An encouraging attempt to find some form of decoration other than chromium plate can be seen in this dashboard from the new Morris 'Oxford'. The small trellis pattern is in plastic and seems to be a modest though positive step in the right direction.

41 The deeply recessed wheel-like type of control on this radio receiver incorporates many of the characteristically modern forms which have been discussed. Yet the crisp finish, good proportions and spacious layout show how this romantic approach to design can be stimulating and satisfying when carried out by a talented designer. Designed by Brooks Stevens for Gamble-Skogmo Inc, U S A.

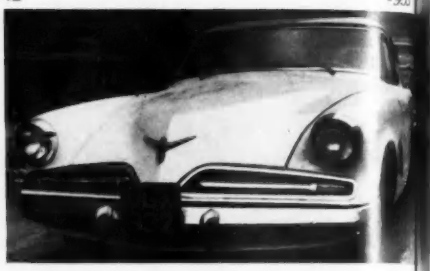
Change for the sake of change

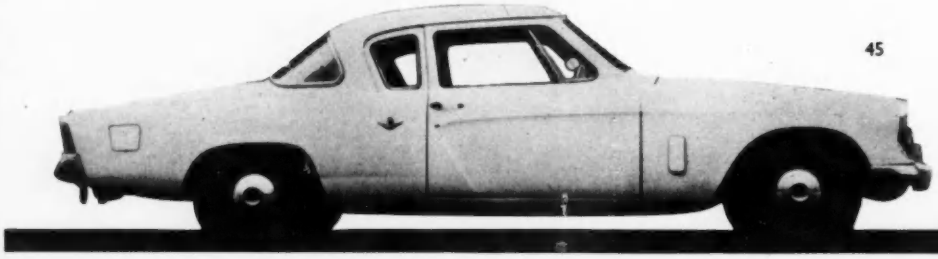
CASE HISTORY 1

Studebaker

The Studebaker designed by Raymond Loewy, the first model of which was produced in 1953, is a revealing example of the way in which a brilliant and original design can be spoilt by additions of heavy, showy trimmings. The radiator grille of the 1953 model, **42**, was modest in proportion and in keeping with the lightness and poise of the car's general shape. The addition of vertical fins in the grille of a later version, **43**, is fussy and introduces a conflicting element. In the latest model, **44**, the character of the original design has been lost completely. The fat, chunky, crude mass of chromium plate is out of harmony with the sensitive lines of the car. At the same time the placing of the nose decoration on the top instead of the front of the bonnet, as on earlier models, adds height to the front of the car and is a contradiction of the designer's original intentions. This confusion of ideas can also be seen in the two side views. The modelling of the slab side with its subtle concave section was designed to overcome the bulbous appearance of many modern cars, **45**. By adding the crude chromium streak, **46**, this effect has been lost for the sake of extra surface glitter.

42 1953





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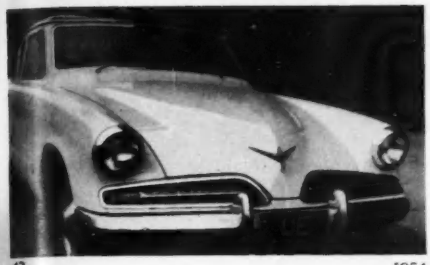
CASE HISTORY 2

Frigidaire

Though it is primarily the motor industry which has been responsible for establishing the practice of changing the superficial appearance of a product by applying new decoration each year, other industries have not been slow to follow suit. These illustrations show changes which have taken place in an American cooker over the course of four years. The 1952 model, **47**, has a more elaborate splash-back than is common in this country (due largely to the number of automatic controls) but its boiling ring controls and door handles are comparatively simple. In the 1953 model, **48**, the more prominent textures have been used on the splash-back and the dials have been rearranged. At the same time the boiler controls and door handles have been elaborated and enlarged. Apart from the addition of salt and pepper containers, there is little change in the next year's model, but the 1955 version, **49**, shows a great increase in the quantity of applied decoration. All the controls have been grouped together on an even larger splash-back, thus giving a greater impression of scientific might. The handles have an ornamental framework and the bottom drawer has been emphasised with chromium streaks. The illustrations show clearly that this type of change must be handled with great care by sensitive designers if a vulgar showiness is to be avoided.

47 1952



43 1954

44 1955

48 1953

47 1955

Acknowledgments

Illustration 2 by permission of 'House Beautiful'. Illustration 7 by permission of 'Interiors'. Illustration 30 by permission of 'Industrial Design'. Illustrations 34, 36 and 41 are from 'Industrial Design in America – 1954' by permission of the Society of Industrial Designers. Illustration 8 was specially drawn by David Knight. Many of the photographs which illustrate this article were specially taken by Sam Lambert.

continued from page 18

the precision of machined surfaces fitting and locking together, an external expression of the skill used in engineering the mechanical parts of the car. Unfortunately the ornament itself is not machined – it would be much too expensive – so it is pressed or cast and then chromium plated. The result is a crude imitation of the real thing, a glittering display of metal, often roughly finished, weak and flaccid in form.

Towards a new 'borax'

These few examples indicate trends which are taking place in many other related fields. They are the basis of a new 'modernistic' style, a new trend which springs from an idea in itself fundamental to this age. Its failure lies in a misunderstanding of the ideals which it aims to achieve. One cannot therefore attempt to impose some arbitrary standard against which one can pronounce this good or that bad. All art is a living, growing thing; one can only *sense* that certain forms will lead to stagnation; others open new fields for exploration and research. The shortcomings of chromium plate for certain types of ornament point to the need for new thought and for experiment with other materials. The 'Westinghouse' refrigerator, already referred to, shows one way of creating successful decoration using coloured plastic. The possibilities inherent in this rare example are endless and suggest countless ideas for the use of moulded plastics, decorated plastic laminates, plasticised fabrics and so on.

Designer's responsibility

The design of the 'Westinghouse' refrigerator, of course, was carried out by one of the most distinguished industrial designers in the U S A. The lesson is obvious, for how often one feels when looking at modern decoration that the hand of the artist, the sculptor or the designer could have found some motif, some treatment that would have added richness and character, instead of the few well-known chromium clichés. In a period when we can expect a growing quantity of mass produced ornament, the responsibility of the designer, and the manufacturer who employs him, becomes increasingly important. If this responsibility is evaded then the outlook is gloomy, for we may find ourselves, a generation hence, burdened with a paraphernalia of outmoded articles which we can dispose of only on the rubbish heap.

Swoe

and shears

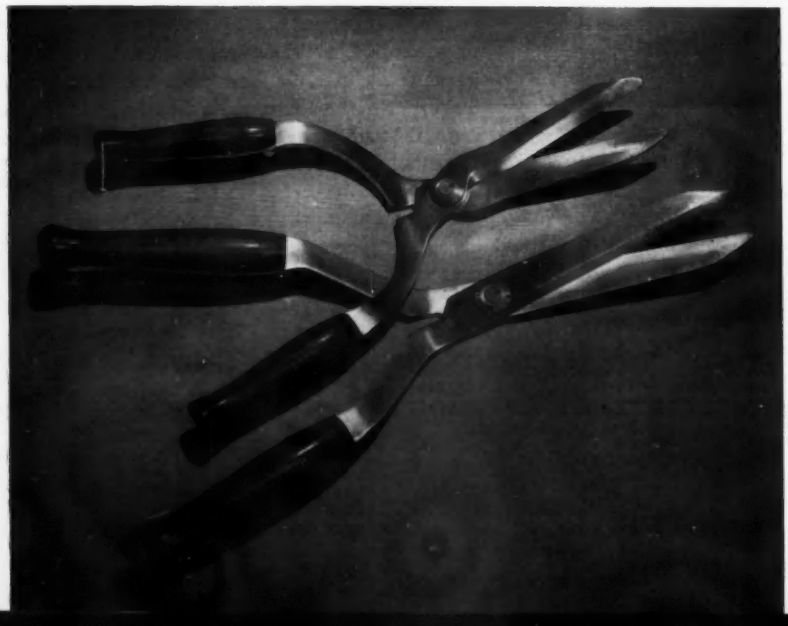
THE NEW MEN'S GARDENING SHEAR described in DESIGN for May 1954, can now be seen as the first step in a programme for redesigning the products of the Wilkinson Sword Ltd. The two latest additions to the range are shown here. Although the men's shear was relatively light and easy to use, both the company and its consultant designer, Hulme Chadwick, saw the need for a special ladies' model. For its size the new shear has an unusually long cutting edge, because of a crank in the blades; the wide splay of the tangs makes the shear comfortable to use. As with other products of the firm a special pack is to be designed by Mr Chadwick.

More revolutionary is the swoe, with the blade offset from the main shaft. Three sides of the blade have a cutting edge and the user finds himself with a new and versatile tool capable of more precise work than the conventional hoe.

Improvements in the design of articles as traditional as garden implements can rarely be successful unless the problems they solve are radically analysed from the beginning. The good appearance and function of these new products for Wilkinson Sword are due largely to the fact that the designer is also a proficient gardener.

ABOVE *The 'Sword-steel' cutting-head of the swoe.*

RIGHT *Hulme Chadwick, the designer, at work with the new swoe for Wilkinson Sword.*



LEFT *The new ladies' shear compared with the men's shear. The crank in the blades and the widely spaced tangs and handles can be seen.*

FURNITURE *survey*

Upholstered occasional chairs

A. GARDNER-MEDWIN

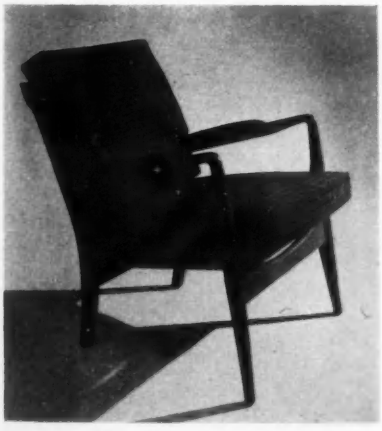
One of a series of articles on modern furniture selected from 'Design Review', the illustrated record of current British products to be seen at the London headquarters of the Council of Industrial Design.

The following groups of furniture are included in the survey

Fully upholstered chairs	MARCH
Dining-tables and chairs	APRIL
Bedroom furniture . .	JUNE
All-purpose chairs . .	JULY
Storage units . . .	AUGUST
Occasional furniture .	SEPTEMBER
Outdoor furniture .	OCTOBER
Kitchen furniture .	NOVEMBER

THE GROWING POPULARITY of the occasional, or fireside chair is revealing. No doubt one of the original reasons for its existence was its cheapness compared with the fully upholstered chair, but although there are still many occasional chairs available at reasonable prices, the general quality and price of this type have risen in recent years. From its continuing popularity, therefore, it would seem that the public has come to accept the occasional chair on its merits.

There is reason to believe that people are now buying furniture with more discrimination than before the war. The three-piece suite is no longer considered essential, and in many cases the customer



Famous for its comfort, this particular chair has been developed over the past three years by refining and improving minor details. In appearance it now has a lightness and grace which are all too rare in occasional chairs. MAKER J. Cinnamon Ltd.

chooses a settee and one easy chair, the third piece being a smaller, pull-up type of chair. Space – or rather the lack of it – is obviously one contributory factor in this change, and television too has had its effect. For instance, it has been partly responsible for settees which can be divided into three or more separate seats when required.

The design of an occasional chair needs to be carefully considered, and these illustrations taken from 'Design Review' show the variety available. The earlier types with bentwood arms are still available, but the more shapely arms in solid wood are often the most attractive feature of the newer designs. As with cabinet work, the selection and finish of the wood employed are important. The pattern of upholstery materials (as mentioned in a previous article) must also be chosen to suit the form of the chair.

Tension springing, in its varied forms, is another reason for the popularity of small chairs, as it offers great comfort when used with appropriate cushions, is cheap and, unlike the coil spring, requires little depth when used in either seat or back.

1

1 *The bend of the arms and tapered front legs are particularly well worked out, and the broad curved back also helps to make this a simple and generous-looking chair. All the more credit to the manufacturers for producing the chair to sell for approximately £10.* MAKER Lebel Products Ltd.

2 *The wing chair has achieved considerable popularity over the past 10 years. This example has simple lines and is well proportioned.* DESIGNER Ronald E. Long. MAKER R. S. Stevens Ltd.

3 *The cradling of the seat and back in a show-wood frame has come off well, and the sculptured lipping of the arms is creditable – particularly in view of its reasonable price.* MAKER Joseph Johnstone Ltd.

2

3

4 *Made by a firm well known for fine workmanship, this chair is extraordinarily comfortable; the amply splayed Windsor back makes it attractive from any angle. Much thought must have gone into the design for the chair to be so reasonably priced and still maintain good quality. A thin padded cushion is supplied to fit the back of the chair.* DESIGNER L. R. Ercolani. MAKER Furniture Industries Ltd.

5 *Another example of the 'all in one' seat and back cradled in a frame – this time of metal. The upholstery is 'Latex Foam' and the head cushion is removable. The arm rests are of preformed plywood. The appearance of such chairs needs to be carefully considered from all sides as the profile is especially prominent.* DESIGNER Robin Day. MAKER S. Hille & Co. Ltd.

6 *Originally made by Packet Furniture, this design is well established. The features of the chair are the laminated wood frame and the separate seat and back cushions. It is an advantage that it can be dismantled and packed flat for transport.* DESIGNER Eric Lyons. MAKER E. Kahn & Co Ltd.

7 *A chair which provides exceptional comfort. There is a flow in its lines which is accentuated by the attached pad in the back.* DESIGNER Howard B. Keith. MAKER H K Furniture Ltd.

8 *There is much good detailing, which is not immediately apparent from the photograph of this chair. The back rails are tapered, and the arms have a pleasant shape. In beech, with rubber cushions, it is an interesting newcomer among occasional chairs and one which 'belongs' to High Wycombe.* DESIGNER J. H. Hills. MAKER George Stone (Furniture) Ltd.

9 *The teak inset on the arms of the chair and matching settee give a decorative appearance to the show-wood frame; the detailing has been carefully thought out.* MAKER Everest (Long Eaton) Ltd.

10 *As might be expected, this is not a cheap chair. The upholstery has been shaped to give comfort and avoid bulk. The wood used is Honduras mahogany. The whole effect is graceful and the chair has great poise. It is made to order only.* DESIGNER Drew Milne. MAKER Wylie & Lochhead Ltd.

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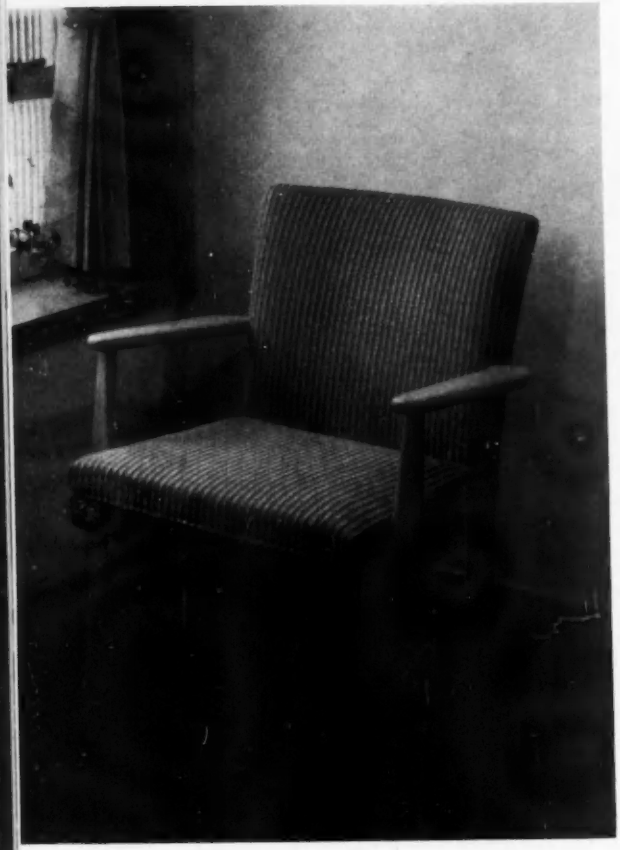
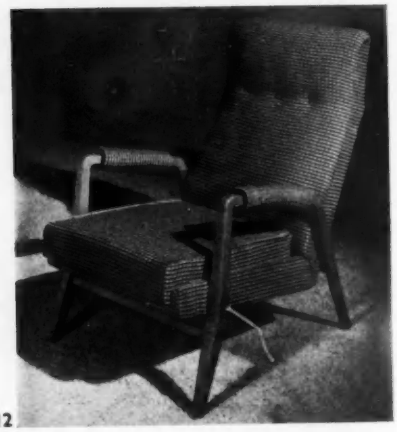




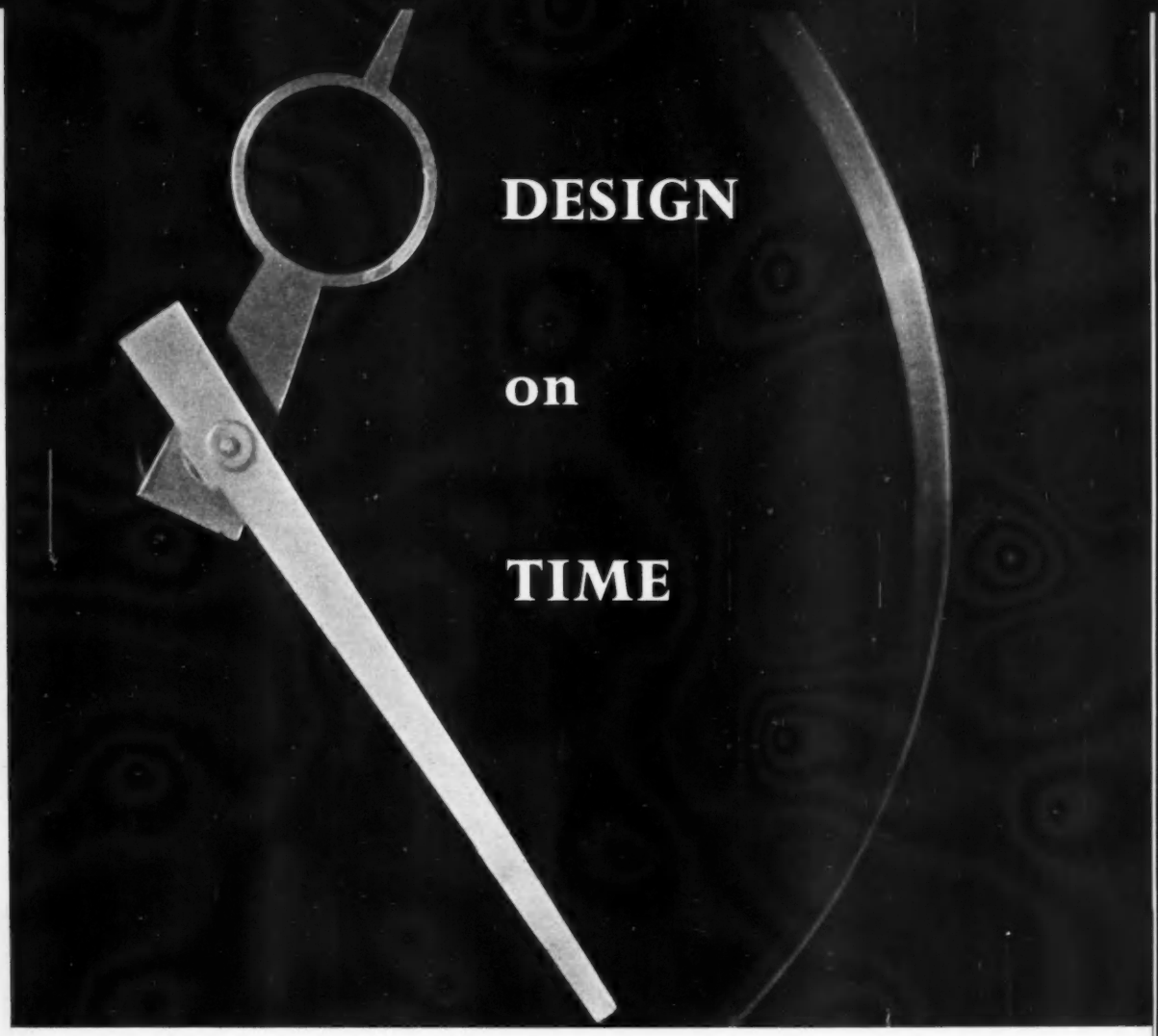
12

11 *Another inexpensive and comfortable little chair which has many uses in the house, and is also suitable for public rooms. The frame is sturdy and well finished. It has the well known Parker-Knoll springing, and 'Latex Foam' cushioning.* MAKER Parker-Knoll Ltd.

12 *The cocking forward of the back to form a headrest is practical; in this case it is also attractive to look at. The arm muffs are stuffed with 'Latex Foam' and give additional comfort. The frame is of beech, and tension springs with rubber upholstery are used for both seat and back.* DESIGNER W. J. Cornell. MAKER Greaves & Thomas Ltd.

13 *A sturdy low chair made in either mahogany or oak, with tension springs and foam rubber cushions. Its compactness makes the chair adaptable for use in many different settings.* DESIGNER Neil Morris. MAKER H. Morris & Co Ltd.

13



DESIGN on TIME

John Gray

The author shows the need for better design for British clocks.

UNTIL VERY RECENTLY, a British architect or designer wanting a clock to suit a modern interior had to design the face in his own office. Today, that is no longer so: a few progressive firms can supply from stock hands, dials and even cases that fit well into the decorative scheme of a modern schoolroom or office. But the choice is still narrow, and the architect is often tempted to reject all offers and commission instead a clock of his own design from one of the more accommodating makers.

Because architects' clocks need never be put up for sale, they enjoy protection from market conservatism and should improve design standards in a trade which, being closely allied to the making of jewellery, is capable of being sensitive to the appearance of things. To some extent architects have given this lead,

for they have brought clarity to dials that must be easily read from a distance, and have endowed hands and chapters with a simple dignity. But they think in terms of large spaces and institutional scenes, and their designs are apt to be frigid or impersonal in the home.

A clock in the home is much more than an efficient timekeeper – and the trade knows this well. People usually take the mechanism of their instrument for granted and grow to love it as an ornament or a piece of furniture. Indeed, clocks decorate many homes long after the hands are severed or the movement broken beyond repair. Timepieces figure largely as presentations to long-service employees and are frequently prized as heirlooms.

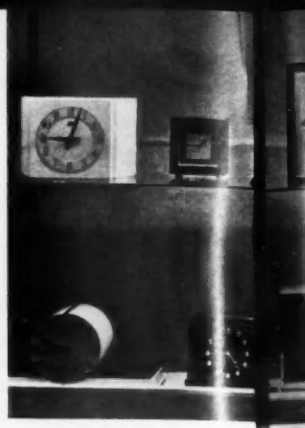
Warmth and clarity

We in Britain badly need to evolve a modern idiom in clock design, but it must bestow warmth and friendliness on its users as well as preserving in miniature the clarity and nobility of the best institutional clocks. Such a combination is not easy to achieve at the moderate prices essential today, and this difficulty explains in part the failure of old-established manufacturers to keep pace with the steady progress of modern furnishings.

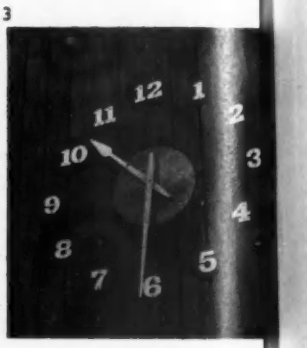
The price factor has become extremely important because much clock making is now done on a large scale and with inexpensive materials and finishes. Mass produced clocks sell much more cheaply than the high-quality products of smaller firms, and while many consumers will always pay more for a clock with individual merits, their number must obviously depend on how narrow the price gap can be kept. Moreover, the large-scale manufacturers cannot hold prices down unless they trade in a big market, and that means assembling an extensive and varied catalogue comprising mainly clocks that have good sales prospects. The temptation to be led by popular taste rather than to mould it is strong, though happily not invincible.

Reasons for improvement

How can British clock design be improved in these unpromising conditions? First, let us consider the mass producers. They have already shown, and examples are illustrated here to prove it, that cheap clocks can be anything but shoddy and vulgar if care is taken in designing them. Indeed, by going back to the fundamentals of good design, these companies have constructed alarm clocks with simple hands, readable dials and unobtrusive cases and stands which sell at 25*s* or less. But they could go further than this. Over a period of say five years they could re-cast their catalogues, throwing



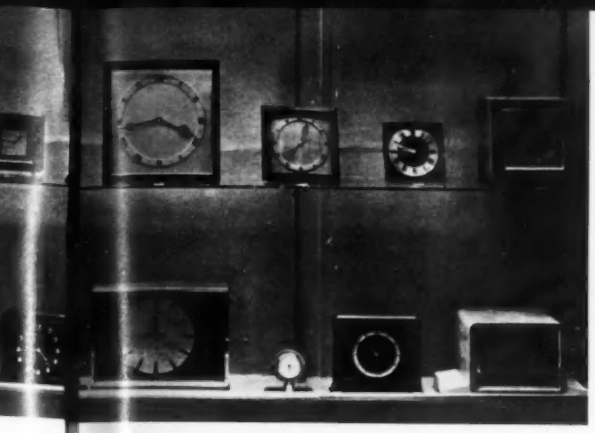
1 *Can you date this display? You might justifiably say* 1955, *but you would be just* 20 *years out. This is a good selection for its day: few of the models are offensive, but almost all are limp and without character like the majority of their present-day counterparts. Photograph taken at the 'Exhibition of British Art in Industry', London,* 1935.



3, **4** and **5** *Three architects' clocks which almost have that personal quality needed for the home.* **3** *From 'Harbour Bar' in the South Bank Exhibition.* DESIGNERS Ward and Austin. **4** *From Wimpson Junior School.* DESIGNERS Lyons & Israel. MAKERS Gent & Co Ltd. **5** *From the 'Time-Life' Building, London.* Movement by Gent & Co Ltd. DESIGNER (of case) H. T. Cadbury-Brown. MAKER (of case) Baume & Co Ltd. *The two interior clocks,* **4** *and* **5**, *have elegant figures, while those of the 'Harbour Bar' clock have a boldness essential to outdoor timekeeping.*

6 *As inexpensive alarm clocks, for use in the dark or daylight, these versions of the same dial and the same luminous hands are neat, effective, and faulty only in their bases. Alarm clocks, though cheap, are often more honestly designed than their reputed betters.* MAKER Smiths Electric Clocks Ltd.

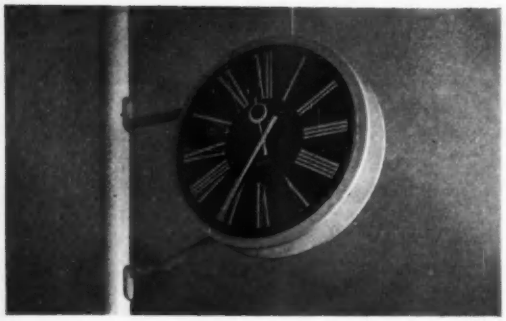
9, **10**, **11** and **12** *Argument for and against cyphers is purely subjective: but when cyphers are used they should be identified without difficulty or irritation. This is hardly the case with* **10** *from the T S S 'Olympia'.* **9** *achieves it with a crudity that is no defect in industrial clocks, such as this.* DESIGNER and MAKER The Magneta Time Co Ltd. *The dash is more emphatic than the dot – a conclusion reinforced by* **11**, *in which every third dash is thickened for greater clarity.* DESIGNER Robin Day. MAKER Gent & Co Ltd. *In* **12**, *the designer has let his fancy run riot with cyphers. The result is an amusing decoration for the wall, though bewildering for those who have to tell the time in a hurry.* DESIGNER Dennis Young. MAKER Baume & Co Ltd.



2

2 *A clock making excellent use of small* Gill Sans *numerals and well constructed hands.* DESIGNER C. Franck. MAKER Baume & Co Ltd.

4



5

7 and 8 *Two worthy attempts to fashion clocks of distinction from existing clichés. Their obvious sincerity shows how futile the task is. Good design must break with a tradition that has become flat and stultifying.* 7 DESIGNER and MAKER Rotherham & Sons Ltd. 8 DESIGNER J. E. V. Winterbourne. MAKER Richard & Tucker Nunn Ltd.

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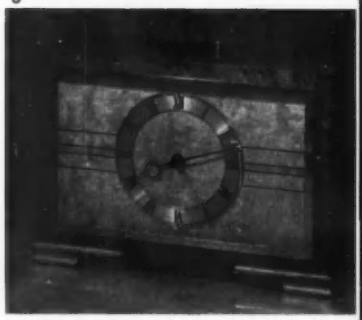

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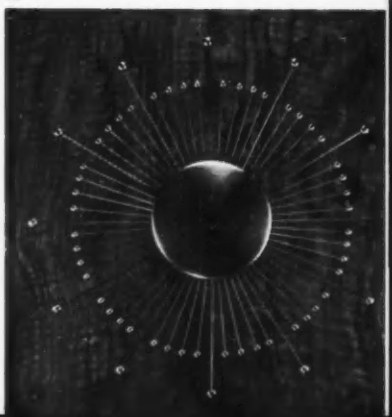

Signpost to the future?

The following examples, not all of which are in production, show some of the best designs available but suggest that there is scope for improvement. At the same time they point to the direction in which progress can be made.

13 and **14** *This bracket clock of distinction,* **13,** *gambles successfully with* Art-Nouveau *decoration. The case is brass, finished in burgundy red, the dial is a mirror with sand-blasted letters, and the handle and feet are of gilt.* DESIGNER F. C. Ashford of Scott-Ashford Associates. MAKER Thomas Mercer Ltd. *The clock,* **14,** *is simple and is surely a starting point for future elaboration of design. It is a model made of 'Perspex' and anodised aluminium, has a detachable foot, and can be used as a wall clock.* DESIGNER Jack Howe. MAKER Gent & Co Ltd.

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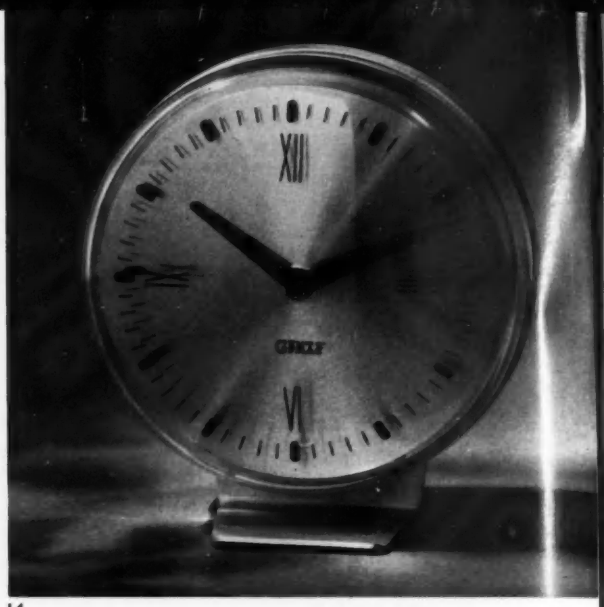

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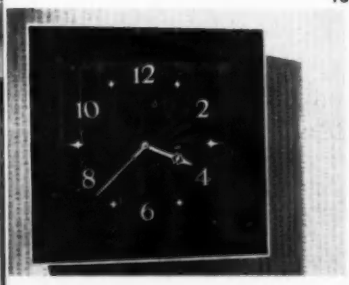


16 *Deep framing of pictures goes well with modern furnishings. A clock is not far removed from a picture and this experiment, though not wholly successful, is so much better than the conventional framed clock that it may have a creative influence.* DESIGNER J. E. V. Winterbourne Ltd. MAKER Richard & Tucker Nunn Ltd.

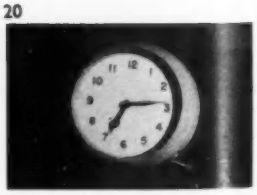
17

17 *A British clock which draws inspiration from the Swiss, particularly in the clean lines of the dial and the fine leather work on the case.* DESIGNER E. E. Brown of F. W. Elliott Ltd. MAKER F. W. Elliott Ltd.

19

19 and **20** *Two desk clocks with a successful combination of dial, case and legs. The American model,* **19,** *hangs from a black iron tripod which is perhaps too obtrusive; but the case, hands and chapters, all of brass, fuse well and make an immediate impact on the eye.* MAKER Herschede. **20,** *A simple arrangement of* sans-serif *numerals, turned wooden frame and legs of polished tube, by a Royal College of Art student, Nigel Chapman.*

20



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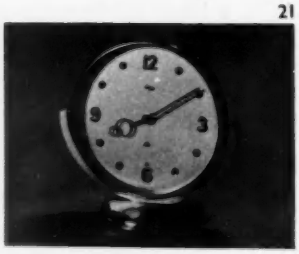


21 and **22** *Two methods of tilting a clock to the required angle. The Swiss clock* **21,** *employs a device known to cabinet makers. This is a friendly, almost cheeky clock that cannot be easily criticised. Note the compromise between numerals and cyphers: commonly used in Switzerland, comparatively little here.* MAKER Arthur Imhof Watch Co. **22** *Another desk clock by Nigel Chapman who uses bent metal tubing for the legs and gets an unusual effect from white letters on a coloured dial.*

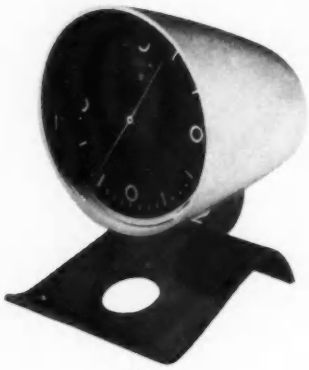
out the bad or mediocre designs that sell poorly, and adding to the number of good designs that do well. At the same time, these big firms could afford the luxury of an *avant-garde* department and speculate each year with a few first rate modern designs which may not find customers immediately, but which will help to discover a style of clock suited to the modern interior. Forward looking designs often risk initial commercial failure, but this is not inevitable. Other trades provide countless examples of shockingly advanced designs succeeding where more tentative designs do not.

The small manufacturer

The small manufacturer, who traditionally has dials, hands and movements made by specialised craftsmen, faces a somewhat different problem. Clocks are only part of his business and not necessarily the most profitable part. His catalogue is small and not easily adjusted. In avoiding high costs he is hampered by the shortage of skilled craftsmen in this country, compared with Switzerland or Germany. There are two choices before him. Either he can become a pioneer and stake all or much of his future as a clockmaker on the fortunes of modern design (one or two firms have already moved in this direction, but the market may not support many of them in present conditions). Or he can experiment occasionally with new designs on a scale that will not cause him financial embarrassment if the designs fail completely.

Since few designers have experience of clocks, probably the best course for a small manufacturer is to employ a consultant designer and steep him in the problems of designing all parts of a clock. In time he can learn how to integrate his approach to these problems, which have all too often been tackled piecemeal, and how, by simplification of outline and wise choice of materials, to keep costs low while enhancing appearance. Such a policy is likely to pay increasing dividends as the designer gains knowledge of this little explored medium and forms a mature judgment of its needs.

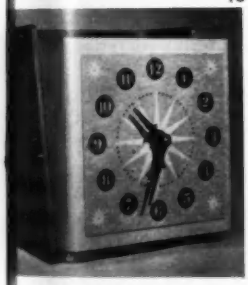
At present there are fewer good clock designs than there are pointers to good design in the future. The same is true of all other countries with the exception of the present home of clocks, Switzerland. The main contribution of architects and interior designers has been to clear the way for those who design clocks as commercial products. They have made it plain that a clock is in essence a chaptered dial with hands and not a wooden hut, or a tombstone, or a radio set or a garden gate. Designers have now to enrich the clock of today giving it that appeal which is freely acknowledged in a Tompion or a Frodsham. To achieve that, they must first be given the chance.



15 *This American swivel clock is included, despite its unattractive dial and hands, because it makes interesting use of materials. The curved plywood base is a good decorative feature on a wall or desk, while the white plastic case is simply and cheaply moulded and offsets the coloured dial cleanly. Its shape, derived possibly from car headlamps, is appropriate to small clocks.* MAKER Telechron Clocks.

15

18



18 *A brave attempt to introduce colour, pattern and a new material into one small clock. The face of light blue 'Formica' plastic sheeting, with blue numerals and yellow stars, is set in a case of walnut and sycamore. It is curious that this experiment has never been followed up, for although the finished design is open to personal objections, the basic principles are not.* DESIGNER Dennis Young. MAKER Baume & Co Ltd.

22

Automatic accounting

Jack Howe

PRESENT-DAY BUSINESS has so grown in size and complexity that manual forms of book-keeping have been forced to give way to mechanical methods of accountancy. Not only has the quantity of such work increased but the need for flexibility is more than ever present with modern complications such as PAYE, purchase tax and National Insurance.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate the progress made in the design of equipment manufactured by The British Tabulating Machine Co Ltd which has developed the 'Hollerith' system of punched-card accounting. In this system there are four main operations needed to obtain the final tabulated result. Firstly the operator produces the punched card on which the number and position of the perforations

PUNCH

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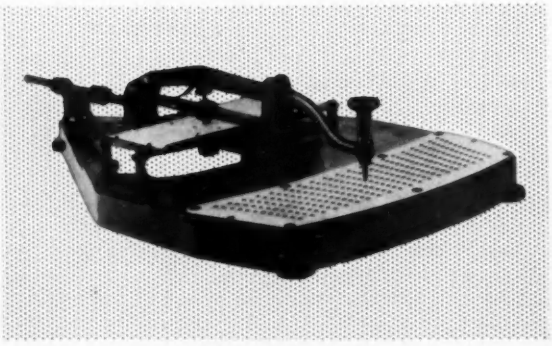

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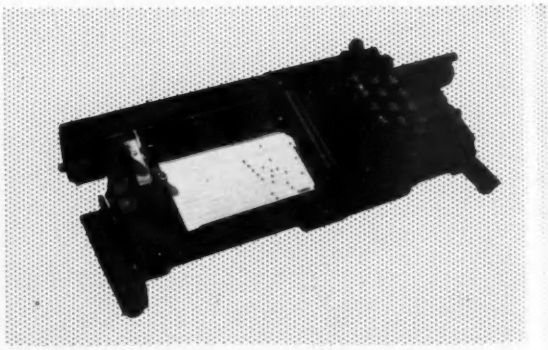


correspond to basic accounting information read from an original document. A second operator, referring to the same original source, verifies the accuracy of the punching.

Before the cards are used for tabulating purposes the sorting machine assembles them into whatever sequence or collation may be required. The cards themselves, through the perforations, transmit the electrical impulses which govern their disposition, at a rate of 40,000 cards per hour. The order may be clock number sequence, labour or material code, alphabetical or chronological, according to the type of listed or tabulated information required.

The next operation requires the tabulator which has three main units: a sensing mechanism to read the punched data contained in the cards, counters to accumulate numerical information and to undertake automatic calculations with the figures, and a print unit for the production in printed form of the final results: invoices, statements, cheques, pay slips, statistical tabulations, and many of the accounting returns required today by industry, commerce, and government departments.

To return to the first operation, that of producing the punched card. The earliest form of punch, **1**, consisted of a manually operated instrument producing single perforations positioned according to the guide plate into which the key was depressed. This was a laborious process justified only by the fact that, once the information was available in this punched form, it could be analysed and dissected as often as required, and in as many data combinations and relationships as the undertaking needed.

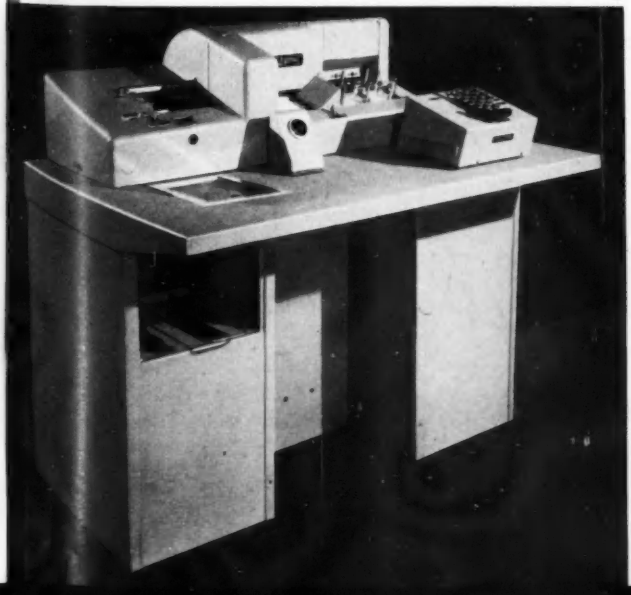
The principle having been established the subsequent development was largely a matter of attaining higher punching speeds, extended automatic operation, and the means of producing printed results. The next stage introduced a keyboard-operated punch containing twelve basic keys, **2**, which marked a considerable advance in both speed and comfort of operation. The act of punching the card, however, was still a direct physical process.

In the latest form, **3**, the keyboard has been detached from the punching operation, which is done electrically, thus the operator can place the keyboard in the most convenient working position, and the effort required to depress the keys is very much less than in the earlier model since only a light electrical contact is made. A further point which aids speed and comfort is the fact that each keyboard operation is one card behind the actual process of perforation; thus a mistake can be 'erased' before the card is actually punched.

The history of the sorter is in many ways similar to that of the punch. It shows a steady development from the slow and laborious to the quick and efficient. In one early sorter, **4**, it was necessary for the operator to stand on a short flight of steps (not shown in the photograph) in order to feed the cards in at the top of the machine. The travelling band would then deposit them in the various racks arranged vertically; and to remove the cards the operator would have to bend – in the worst case – to ground level.

The next development was to arrange the machine horizontally and **5** shows a more recent model. The 'Queen Anne' legs may strike one as somewhat

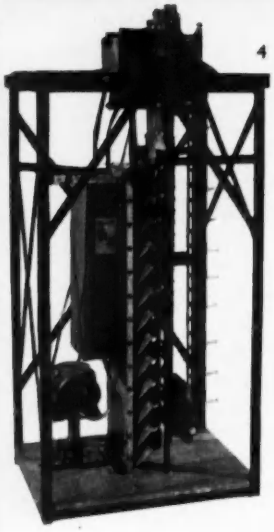
3



1 *The first 'Hollerith' key punch designed on the pantograph principle. Pressing down the index arm into a perforated celluloid guide automatically punches the card in a corresponding position. First used in* 1885.

2 *A later version of the 'Hollerith' hand key punch first introduced in* 1902.

3 *Latest type of punch designed as a desk unit with separate keyboard. The design of the keyboard is poorly related to the desk itself, and there appears to be no reason why the signal-lamp should not be incorporated in the metal covering which protects the punching mechanism.*



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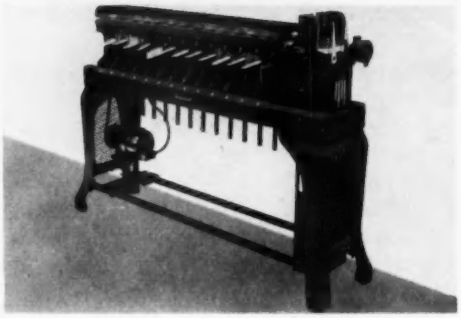
SORTER



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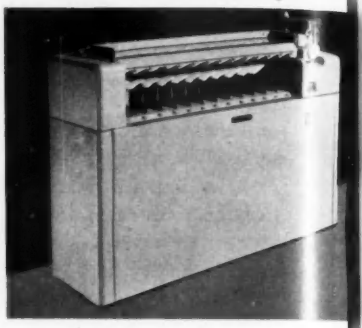


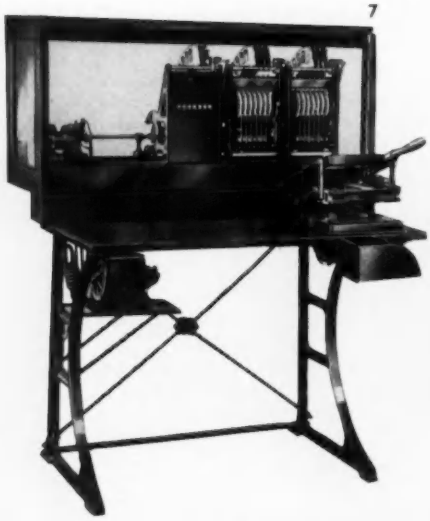
6

incongruous but the basic operational requirement had been met. In the latest design, **6**, little has been changed, but additional equipment housed below the main sorting mechanism has been completely enclosed.

The tabulator has also followed a similar pattern of development. From the early designs to the latest model, **7–10**, each change has shown an advance in efficiency, speed and ease of operation. A very considerable problem has been the need to accommodate new features and at the same time to provide access for maintenance.

The British Tabulating Machine Co Ltd does not sell its machines. They are let on hire and maintained by the manufacturers. This matter of maintenance is one that affects considerably the design of the equipment as it is essential that servicing shall be done quickly and without undue inconvenience to the user. Access panels are provided in preference to hinged doors for economy in space. The panels are normally secured by coin-slot fasteners but in some cases these have been superseded by recessed turn-buttons for greater convenience.

It is encouraging to see in the latest models that considerable attention has been paid to the design of the metal cladding. It is clean, straightforward, and goes a long way towards making the machine appear as efficient as it undoubtedly is. Until recently black crackle finish was the standard: a dreary colour and an unpractical surface. This is being changed



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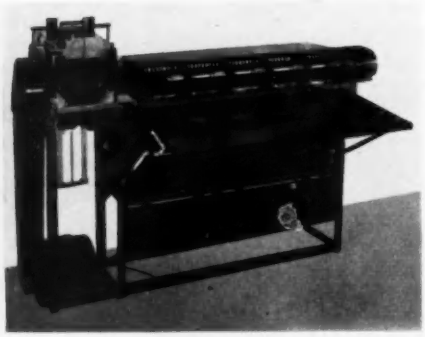
TABULATOR



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7 *Pin box tabulator entirely hand-operated. Used in* 1904.

8 *'Hollerith' tabulator with automatic feed and stacking, but no printing unit. Used in* 1908.

9 1953 *version of the 'Senior' rolling total tabulator introduced in* 193[illegible].

10 *Latest type of 'Hollerith' rolling total tabulator. An ever-increasing bulk of equipment has had to be accommodated in the smallest possible space and suitably protected by removable covers. This cladding is particularly well designed but the finish, although improved by a lighter colour, still retains the unpleasant and unpractical 'crackle' surface.*

4 *An early vertical sorter used in 1908. This machine had a speed of 250 card passages per minute. The operator had to use steps to insert the cards at the top and then stoop to floor level to retrieve the lowest card.*

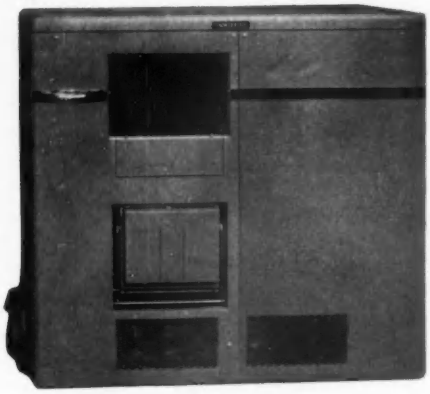
5 *The 1954 version of the 'Hollerith' high-speed sorter with a speed of 650 cards per minute. As long as the space below the sorting racks contained no additional equipment it was reasonable that the mechanism should be supported on legs, although perhaps not quite like these. The driving motor illustrates the first encroachment upon this space.*

6 *The latest design of horizontal sorter. The 'Queen Anne' legs have disappeared and the void below the sorting mechanism has become filled with additional equipment thus justifying the enclosure of this space.*

CALCULATOR

11 *Electronic calculator. It is unfortunate that it was thought either necessary or desirable to add the horizontal plated band to the calculator thus effectively spoiling a good design. The complementary gang punch is not shown.*

11



and the new lighter tone has done much to reduce the apparent bulk, especially on the tabulator.

The importance of high quality finish and detail cannot be over-emphasised in connection with machines costing more than a high-powered motor-car. The exterior is the part which is normally seen and by which a product will often be judged.

The company does not employ an industrial designer either on its staff or in a consulting capacity, nevertheless a considerable advance has been achieved in the most recent products due largely to an intuitive sense of design induced by good engineering.

This does not mean that every machine is of an equally high design standard. For example, the automatic punch, **3**, is not particularly well proportioned, and while the advantage of the separate keyboard is acknowledged, both this and the signal-lamp are not happily related to the desk itself. In the case of the electronic calculator, **11**, a good designer would certainly not have added the horizontal plated band, and it is doubtful whether he would tolerate the undistinguished nameplate and its somewhat indeterminate positioning.

A number of pieces of ancillary equipment are manufactured for use with the 'Hollerith' system including card storage cabinets, desks, lockers and trolleys. The design of this equipment is disappointing and bears no comparison with the machines themselves. It appears, therefore, that there is scope for a major re-design programme.

9

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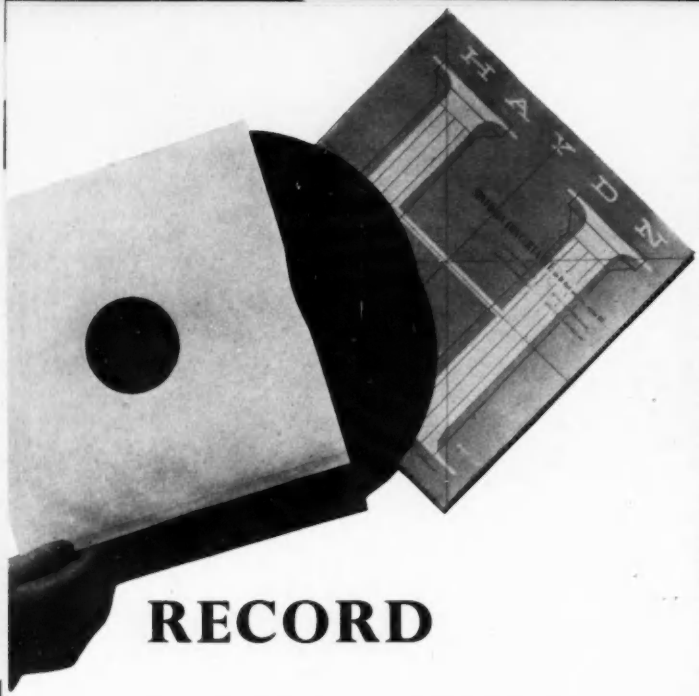


RECORD PACKAGING

Peter Sieber

LONG PLAYING RECORDING has dramatically and quickly transformed the whole record industry. One of the results of this development has been a transformation in the packaging of records, because the L P record needs more careful protection against dust, and its greater value makes more elaborate containers economically possible. Beginning with the first British releases by Decca in 1945, L P records have appeared in attractive and well made sleeves and not in traditional limp and quickly dog-eared envelopes.

These cases must meet the usual packaging requirements: protection of the product, sales appeal while on display and a long and useful life. Although L P records are virtually unbreakable, they are sensitive to scratching and must be protected against dust. The sleeve must therefore cover the disc without leaving any exposed sides, and at the same time no paper edges must lie directly against any face of the record since this could damage the grooves. Several wallet type of cases have been used, but now practically all makers employ a double envelope. The record is first put into an inner sleeve made of board or paper, and this is then placed, open end first, into an outer sleeve. The outer sleeves are made of board and most of them are printed in two or three colours letterpress on one side, with analytical programme notes on the other side. About half the cases have a plastic laminated coating, which gives them longer life, enhanced appearance, and also makes them washable.

The designs on the front of the sleeves present a difficult problem, and quite different policies have been adopted in its solution by different recording companies. There are, broadly speaking, three distinct lines of approach. The first is to emphasise the particular make of record by giving each sleeve some form of standard design or background. The second is to display the musician, the conductor or a soloist, or, more rarely, the composer. The third possibility is to illustrate the recorded music itself. For example, the Decca group has in the past always stressed the musical work and has produced a large number of excellent cases on this principle. All Vox and Nixa and many Argo designs also illustrate the music. His Master's Voice, Columbia and Parlophone first released standard designs, but soon changed to cases which mainly display the artists; the examples shown here indicate that this has been achieved in many striking ways without repetition. Philips first issued sleeves with standard borders surrounding individual designs, but it was found that this imposed too great a restriction on the designers, and the border was abandoned. Current Philips releases show either the artist or the recorded work.

The sleeves with designs devoted to recorded music present the greatest challenge to the artist. He must somehow convey the essential character and mood of the music and it is not surprising that this group of sleeves shows the widest extremes of quality. The more successful designs in this group are particularly good, but the failures can be particularly nasty. Obviously, each artist has his own style, and the representational contents of the designs differ greatly. Some quite straightforwardly represent the story of the music, or the period of its origin, or some other aspect of the work. Many more indicate these things by some more or less stylised symbols. It is particularly noteworthy that amongst innumerable designs only a handful are wholly abstract.

Well over 1,000 recordings, amounting to a total of more than four million records, are released in this country each year. On the whole, the general level maintained in the design of the sleeves is consistently very high. Anyone concerned about present day design must feel grateful that the majority of record firms are endeavouring not only to provide well recorded music, but also to present it in a visually pleasing form.

1

a recital of
rlatti
sonatas
Sonata in G major (Longo 349)
Sonata in D major (Longo 424)
Sonata in A major (Longo 495)
Sonata in D minor (Longo 413)
Sonata in B flat major (Longo 497)
Sonata in F major (Longo 326)
Sonata in C major (Longo 457)
Sonata in G major (Longo 331)
Sonata in B flat major (Longo 448)
Sonata in F minor (Longo 475)
Sonata in E major (Longo 25)
Sonata in B major (Longo 450)
Sonata in B minor (Longo 33)
Sonata in A major (Longo 483)
Sonata in D major (Longo 461)
Sonata in G major (Longo 487)
Harpsichord
LONG PLAYING
33 r.p.m.
DECCA
ffrr
Long playing
range recording

1 *A particularly successful representational Decca design.*

2 *A historic case: the very first British L P release issued by Decca in 1945, showing the three-colour front design. Analytical 'programme' notes are on the reverse side. These now appear on the back of L P sleeves from all firms.*

3 *Another Decca case representing the feeling of the recorded music.*

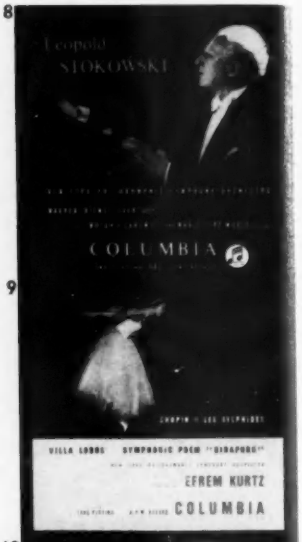
2 3

4 *A design that symbolises the instrument.*

5 and 6 *Two particularly successful Decca designs again representing the feeling of the recorded music.*

4 5 6

7



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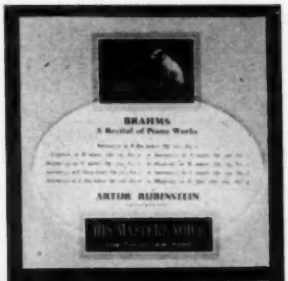

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12

13

7 and **8** *Two cases for H M V and Columbia records showing the musician.*

9 *A particularly beautiful photographic treatment of a representational Columbia case.*

10 *Another example showing the artist.*

11 *The standard H M V design which was used for earlier releases from that firm.*

12 and **13** *Two further examples from Columbia and Parlophone again showing the artist.*

14

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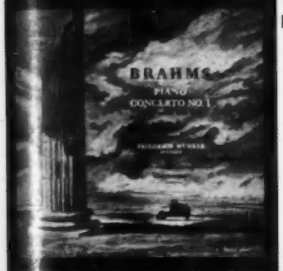
16



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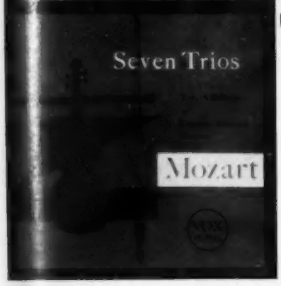
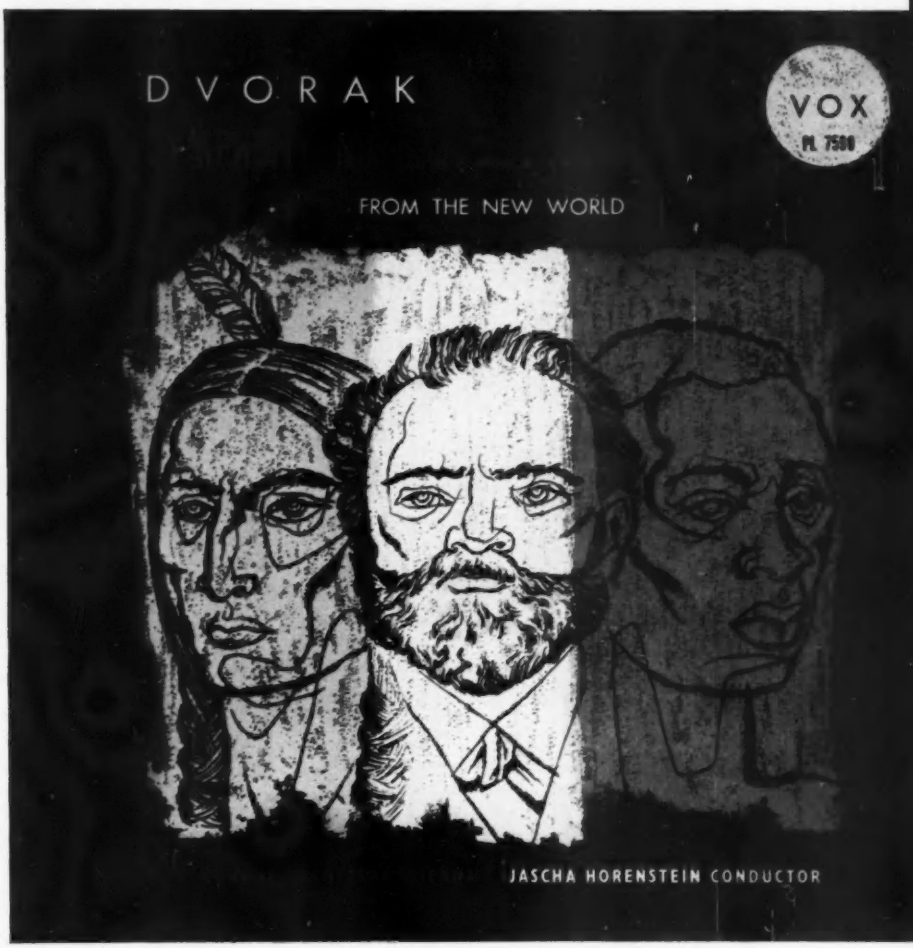




14 *A striking design for a Vox case symbolising the quartet.*

15, 16 and 17 *Three good designs from Vox symbolising the music.*

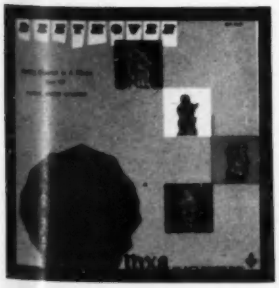
18 *A successful case from Nixa.*

19 *A Monarch case with one of the standard border designs. Both the colours and the abstract elements of the border can be changed for different releases.*

20 *A sensitive and imaginative Argo design illustrating the recorded poetry.*

21 *A straightforward photographic Argo case in one colour only. This is a good design in an idiom that frequently produces very dreary results.*

18



19

20 21

BENNY GOODMAN
AND HIS ORCHESTRA, TRIO AND QUARTET
featuring HARRY JAMES LIONEL HAMPTON GENE KRUPA TEDDY WILSON ZIGGY ELMAN and the Benny Goodman Orchestra
Jazz Concert No.2
1937-1938
PHILIPS
Minigroove 33⅓

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

22 and **23** *Current Philips cases, each with an entirely individual design.*

24 and **25** *Two examples of the earlier Philips releases with a standard border treatment.*

26, 27, 28 and **29** *Last, but certainly not least from the point of view of good design, a pleasing jazz quartet. Here, too, the London, Decca and Felsted cases from the same company portray the music; the Columbia case portrays the artist*

NEWS

EXHIBITIONS

Boost for British exports

Britain is again to take part officially in the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto (August 26–September 10). The Board of Trade, in association with the CoID, is organising a selective display of well designed consumer goods to be shown in the 'Modern U K' Pavilion. This follows on the success of last year's display – visited by many buyers from Canadian stores and also by about a quarter of a million of the general public – which confirmed that Canadians were impressed with the high standard of modern British design, besides being keen to 'buy British' whenever possible. Selection of exhibits in all but three categories will be made from 'Design Review', the CoID's illustrated record of well designed consumer goods. Inquiries should be made to Major-General J. M. Benoy, Council of Industrial Design, Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1.

British instrument industries

The third British Instrument Industries Exhibition to be held at Earls Court, London, from June 28–July 9, will show the latest equipment of manufacturers of scientific instruments. Technicians will be available throughout the exhibition to demonstrate the ways in which equipment can be used. The organisers, F. W. Bridges and Sons Ltd, have made arrangements to cater for oversea visitors, and large numbers of them will attend. This exhibition offers the industrialist the opportunity to examine the latest methods and equipment which are now at his disposal. Industrial meters, automatic controls, glassware, drawing office equipment, are some of the articles which will be on view.

Printing machinery

The Tenth International Printing Machinery and Allied Trades' Exhibition will be held at Olympia from July 5–16. Known as 'Ipex', this exhibition of printing machinery and equipment is the biggest ever held in this country. Tickets are 2*s* 6*d* each; but where 50 or more tickets are bought for *bona fide* members of the trade the price will be 1*s* per ticket. The public will not be encouraged to attend. The time of opening is 9.30 each day; closing time is 6 except on July 9, 13 and 16 when the closing time is 9. On Sundays the exhibition will be closed. The British Federation of Master Printers has taken space for a stand, whose number is G 3 and it will be found in the Grand Hall. The Hall will be a convenient rendezvous for members, and staff officials will be in attendance to answer inquiries. The Federation has invited 'Patra' (Printing, Packaging and Allied Trades Research Association) and the International Bureau of Federations of Master Printers to accept the hospitality and use of part of the stand, and both organisations have accepted the invitation. Members of the staffs of those bodies will therefore also be present, and will doubtless be glad to help members in matters falling within their sphere of activity.

Centenary of aluminium

From June 1–11 there will be an exhibition designed by Ronald Dickens, at the Royal Festival Hall, to mark the centenary of aluminium as a commercial metal, and to show its wide application in industrial processes. When first produced, aluminium was rated as a precious metal, and the first article to be made of it was a rattle for the child of the Emperor Napoleon III, who also ordered aluminium cutlery to replace the gold plate at the Tuileries banquets. The exhibition will trace the advance of aluminium since those days to its present state of development as the basis of a vast range of products from saucepans to aeroplanes.

British plastics

The third British Exhibition and Convention will be held at the National Hall, Olympia, from June 1–11. As in 1951 and 1953 this biennial event is organised by the journal 'British Plastics', with the co-operation of the British Plastics Federation. The 1953 exhibition was attended by buyers from over 50 countries and a substantial increase is expected this year; over 100 firms will exhibit in an area of over 90,000 sq ft. At the same time the British Plastics Convention will be held in an adjacent hall. The exhibition will be open from 10–6 each day, except Sunday. Free tickets to the exhibition and convention are available to all *bona fide* visitors on application to 'British Plastics', Dorset House, Stamford Street, SE1.

Flaxman and Wedgwood

To celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of John Flaxman, an exhibition of his work is being held in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly, and will remain open for about two months. The exact duration has not yet been decided. The exhibition includes many examples of Flaxman's work for Josiah Wedgwood, some of which are very rare, while some are still being produced at the Wedgwood factory today.

R S A bursaries

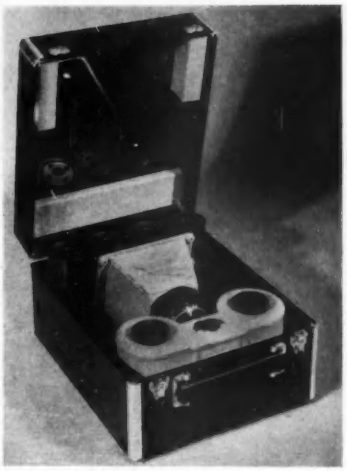
An exhibition of the winning and commended designs in 'The 1954 Industrial Bursaries Competition' (DESIGN August 1954 page 41) is to be opened by the Rt Hon Sir David Eccles at the Royal Society of Arts, and will remain open to the public from May 16–28. The hours are 10–5.30 from Mondays to Fridays, and from 10–12.30 on Saturdays. Details of the awards are published in the R S A journal of March 4.

Cheltenham art festival

Among the attractions at the Cheltenham art festival are talks by Sir Gerald Kelly, Eric Newton, Michael Ayrton and Sir John Rothenstein each evening from May 23–26, and exhibitions of modern art and sculpture from May 14–June 4. On May 20–22, the CoID, in association with the Cheltenham College of Art, is organising a course of seven lectures on 'Colour and design in the home'. The speakers, both from the CoID's lecture panel, will be Charlotte Mayer and Stephen Garrett. The course is non-residential, and the fee is 5*s*. Those interested should write for further particulars to the College of Art, or the Town Hall, Cheltenham.

B I F

The British Industries Fair at Olympia, which takes place from May 2–13 (DESIGN April page 45), is open to trade buyers from 9.30–6 on weekdays. The general public will be admitted after 2, except on Saturday, May 7, when it will be admitted from 9.30. Entry is 2*s* 6*d*. Intending exhibitors are reminded that booking space is still available in some sections.



Permanent packaging

An oscilloscope camera case by H. Comoy & Co Ltd. The transportation case contains location blocks and pressure pads to house the camera, with a cassette tray for unexposed spools and a view magnifier shelf. Comoy cases are designed for use under rigorous conditions, from the tropics to polar regions, and therefore have to be strong, free from corrosion, easily sterilised, and immune from attack by pests or fungi.

German exhibitions

Among the exhibitions and trade fairs to be held in Dusseldorf this year is the Radio, Phono and Television Exhibition from August 26 – September 4, and the 'Plastics 1955' Trade Fair and Production Exhibition from October 8–16.

Glass on show

There will be a comprehensive display of English crystal in May at the Basil Street Hotel, Knightsbridge. The show is organised by Webb Corbett Ltd, and will be open to buyers from May 3–11 and to the public from May 12–13.

COMPETITIONS

Competitive craftsmanship

The closing date for entries for the competition and demonstration of craftsmanship organised by the Goldsmiths', Silversmiths' and Jewellers' Art Council of London is May 20. Entry forms and details of conditions can be obtained from the Clerk of the Goldsmiths' Company, Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Lane, EC2.

Glass competition

To commemorate the opening of its premises at 19 Portland Place the Glass Manufacturers' Federation is holding a competition for art students. The glass industry has been neglected by artists, and it is hoped that this competition will stimulate interest in a

subject that offers many opportunities. It will also enable an historical record to be made of many processes that are going out of existence due to technical development. Students of any college or school of art in the U K and employees of glass manufacturers will be eligible. Entry forms must reach the Secretary, Glass Manufacturers' Federation, 19 Portland Place, London W1, by July 30, and entries by September 30. Particulars should be obtained from the above address. At the end of the competition a public exhibition of a selection from the entries will be held in London.

CONFERENCES

London for textiles

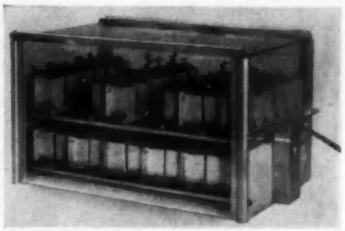
At a recent meeting of the London Section of the Textile Institute, C. H. Colton, President, spoke on 'The Role of London in the Textile Industry'. London, Paris and New York, he said, were pre-eminent in textile distribution, partly because they were well separated geographically from the textile producing areas of their respective countries. In all three countries geographical separation helped the capital city to perform the important function of adding the extra element of fashion appeal to the manufacturing neighbourhood's appreciation of intrinsic value. London's role in textiles was to sense the need and to know where to turn for the answer. Mr Colton was certain that the country's future in textiles depended more on better design and high quality than on price. London could help in this respect by inspiring new ideas instead of being content, as in the past, to select from what was offered. He was glad that the newer fibres were much more centred on London than the traditional fibres. This was important because textiles would be dependent on the new fibres for attracting attention in the future. Only by publicity could textiles claim their proper share of the public's money in the home market.

A quest for colour

The British Colour Council's 13th Designers' Conference is to be held by the Interior Decoration and Design Division in London from May 2–6. These dates coincide with the first week of the British Industries Fair which will be visited during the Conference. The proceedings of the Conference will be opened with a dinner on Monday evening, May 2, at which Henry G. Dowling will preside as Chairman of the Interior Decoration and Design Division. Mr Dowling also holds office as Chairman of the British Colour Council this year. He has been long associated with the B C C and has wide contacts in the field of colour and design in this country and abroad. The programme of the Conference will include a panel of speakers answering questions on different aspects of the theme 'A Quest for Colour', talks on colour and lighting in relation to the modern interior, and visits and films. At the same time as the Conference there will be an exhibition at Portman Square showing paintings, drawings, ceramics, textile designs and so on by designers attached to member firms.

Chandigarh – an experiment

Maxwell Fry recently spoke in London on the work that has gone into the planning of Chandigarh, the new capital of the Punjab; and his lecture not only sketched in the geographical and historical background, but also showed the lives and needs of the inhabitants of the city. Chandigarh is a tremendous undertaking. It has cost some £13,000,000, much of which has been recovered by the sale of building land; thousands of labourers (men, women and children) have worked on its construction, for it was built largely by hand; enormous amounts of material including millions of hand made bricks have gone into its buildings. And yet these figures are not the most impressive feature. As one hears the story and sees the pictures of the houses so appropriate to their setting, one is impressed chiefly by the people who will inhabit them – the messenger who lives in the £244 house, the clerk who sleeps on the roof, the wife on whose account (for reasons of purdah) an alternative passage must be planned, the sweeper for whom a special door was made. Chandigarh was not made to please the whims of its architects and planners, but for the inhabitants. Three years after its beginning, 20,000 people are living there. Already there are high schools, nursery schools, junior schools, a polytechnic, an art school, a health centre and six swimming pools. They are learning from each other, and from the work being done in their city. "After all," said Mr Fry, "what takes place in people's minds is what interests the architect."

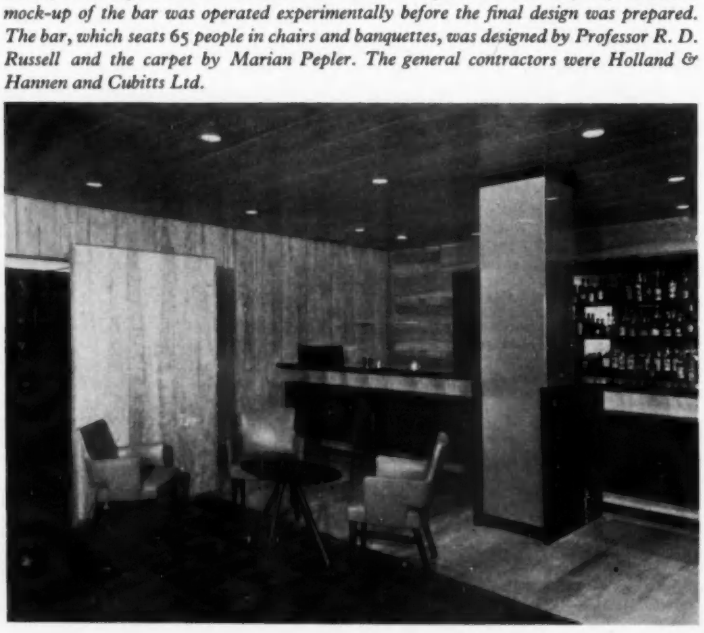


Seed propagator

This electrically heated propagating cabinet has been designed to germinate seeds under artificial conditions. Healthy seedlings are produced with strong root formation, and germination usually takes a few days. Orchids, cacti, even African violets can be produced in the propagator, which is made by John Pinches Ltd.

New bar for London hotel

The new cocktail bar at the Grosvenor House, London, is an essay in the use of different woods, including Brazilian rosewood and French aspen. To ensure speedy service a mock-up of the bar was operated experimentally before the final design was prepared. The bar, which seats 65 people in chairs and banquettes, was designed by Professor R. D. Russell and the carpet by Marian Pepler. The general contractors were Holland & Hannen and Cubitts Ltd.



The interdependence of art and science

At the Textile Institute Spring Convocation held recently, Robin Darwin, Principal of the R C A, revived the theme of art and science. The present gulf between the artist and the scientist was started by the Industrial Revolution, said Mr Darwin. Before that, in Renaissance Italy for instance, the two interests were sometimes combined in the same person. This admirable tendency to see things whole and not in parts was destroyed by the scramble to get rich, and in consequence such things as good design took a back seat. Recently a refreshing change had taken place. The scientist began to feel the need for the humanities and the artist was aware that he was living in a scientific age. The increasing importance of good design in industry and the work of the CoID was beginning to effect a reconciliation between art and technology. There was however still a gulf which could be bridged by education. The acute shortage of science masters meant that many graduates today missed the analytical, logical and objective processes of thought which to a large extent the Classics used to provide, and which was one of the best ways to prevent the gap between the professional man and the

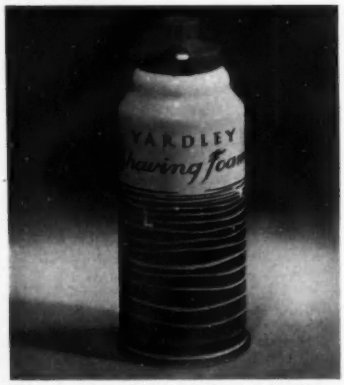
scientist from widening still further. The art schools themselves perhaps shared the blame: their concentration on the empirical rather than the methodical approach was probably why industry here, unlike America, was rather reluctant to acknowledge the growing importance of the designer.

MISCELLANEOUS

Printing industry honoured

At the yearly meeting of the City and Guilds of London Institute (Department of Technology) the Insignia Award in Technology (C G I A) and the Insignia Award Warrant were recently presented to R. B. Fishenden at Skinners' Hall. It is the first time that the Insignia Award has been made to anyone in the printing and allied industries. Since 1943 Mr Fishenden has been print consultant to Spicers Ltd. He is editor of the 'Penrose Annual', now recognised as the international annual of the graphic arts; and technical editor of King Penguins. He recently had the distinction of being made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society; is also an Honorary Fellow of the Society of Industrial Artists and a member of several advisory bodies connected with printing. He is deeply interested in education for the printing industry and has acted as occasional inspector for the Board of Education. Since 1947 he has been chairman of the City and Guilds Advisory Committee of Typography and of the Lithography Advisory Committee, and is a member of the Institute's Consultative Committee on Education for the Printing Industry. In 1954 he received the O B E 'for services to printing'.

Shaving foam



The American Chemical Specialities Manufacturers' Association has announced the award of its first prize for design to the Yardley Shaving Foam Pack. This was designed for Yardley of London Inc, U S A, by the Yardley studio in London, whose director is Reco Capey. It is black and white with a green cap and lettering.

Announcements

Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co Ltd points out that the maximum voltage of the transformer mentioned in the third caption in 'Transformers transformed' (DESIGN February page 38) is 275 kilovolts.

In DESIGN February page 49 it was wrongly stated under the heading 'Typographic design' that the London School of

1

British student designs in Norway

A party of sixteen British students from the Royal College of Art and from the Kingston School of Art recently spent two weeks in Norway designing the furnishings of an exhibition flat. The party was invited by Eyvind Lundbo, architect and teacher at the Bergen School of Art, where workshop accommodation was provided for the women students. The male students attended factories to see their designs carried out, and all were helped by three Norwegian designers, who acted as intermediaries.

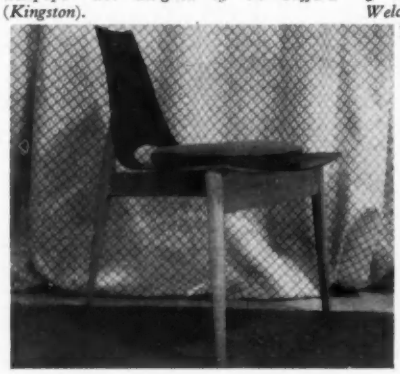
Before leaving for Norway the party had been able to study a plan of the flat, but on arrival it was found that four days only were allowed for the design of each article. Interior designers first surveyed the flat and listed requirements to the team leader, W. G. Mitchell of the R C A. He in turn passed these to each student who specialised in one or other subject. Most of the designs were completed within the time limit, and before the end of a week work had started in the School workshop and in the factories to complete the finished products.

The furnishings of this flat aroused considerable interest, particular attention being paid to the silverware, which was bought by the Bergen Museum, and to some chairs made from formed plywood. The results, some of which are shown here, suggest that the experiment is well worth repeating.

1 *Storage unit made of teak veneered blockboard supported on a tubular steel framework. The door and drawer fronts are covered with white plastic. Designers D. Kester-Dodgson (R C A) and B. Holdaway (Kingston). The wallpaper was designed by P. Clifford (Kingston).*

2 *Three-legged chair with formed plywood seat and back, designed by A. Tilburry (Kingston).*

3 *Sterling silver vase designed by R. R. Welch (R C A).*



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Printing and Graphic Arts is the only one with a typography course to have the Ministry of Education's approval for the award of the National Diploma in Design at 'special' level. The Maidstone College of Art and the Leicester College of Art also have full time courses approved by the Ministry for the National Diploma.

Electronics and design

Technical Designs Ltd recently extended the scope of its technical services, which are given to many industries, by setting up an electronics department to cover every application of this rapidly growing science.

Italian medals for Britain

Elizabeth Eaton Ltd showed two designs – 'Palamos' and 'Panorama' – in the British exhibit at the Tenth Triennale in Milan (DESIGN January page 47). Both designs were by Sylvia Chalmers and received awards. 'Palamos' was also shown at the Toronto exhibition.

Refrigerator showroom

The Coldrator Refrigeration Showroom at Crown House, Aldwych, London WC2, was informally opened on March 9.

Marine pottery

One of three Wedgwood vases recently presented by A. I. Anderson on behalf of the Chamber of Shipping of the U K to the Dutch Shipowners' Association to commemorate its fiftieth anniversary. The vases are traditional Wedgwood shapes in cream colour 'Queensware' – the name given to this colour by Queen Charlotte, wife of George III. The words 'Mare Liberum' are a tribute to the seventeenth-century Dutch jurist Grotius whose writings gave prominence to the doctrine of the 'Freedom of the Seas'. On the back of the vase is a spray consisting of tulip, marguerite and orange-blossom – flowers normally associated with the Netherlands – with a besom broom. The broom is a reference to the story of Admiral Tromp who sailed up the Channel with a broom at his masthead in token of his claim to be able to sweep the seas clear of all foes. The incident is recorded on the back of the vase, implying that his victory over Blake near Dungeness in 1652 is an incident best forgotten. The sprays were engraved from plates made at the Wedgwood Studio, and were designed by Kenneth Sprosan who is joining the Wedgwood design staff.

Typographic design

The typographic design policy of Linotype and Machinery Ltd has provided a welcome stimulus to current printing. One of the company's recent ventures was Pilgrim, a re-cutting of a design by the late Eric Gill. Pilgrim is not made larger than 14 point: when it was introduced, Linotype announced that a new type would be produced to serve as a 'display size' companion. This new face, called Minerva, will consort with many other text types as well as Pilgrim. Reynolds Stone, the distinguished wood engraver and letter cutter, was commissioned to design Minerva, his first typeface. At first sight, the design is traditional Roman, but closer examination shows a welcome relaxation of classic inscriptional forms. The first sizes of Minerva are 18 and 24 point roman, italic and bold; the 30 and 36 point sizes are in production. The current issue of 'Linotype Matrix', one of the journals published by Linotype and Machinery Ltd, fully demonstrates the new type. Some examples are shown below.

18-point Linotype Minerva

ABCDEFGHIJK
LMNOPQRSTU
VWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJK
LMNOPQRSTU
VWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJK
LMNOPQRSTU
VWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz
1234567890

Obituaries

Percy Hague Jowett

Percy Hague Jowett, who died on March 4, was known for his activities as teacher and administrator as much as for his achievement as an artist. He was successively Principal of the Chelsea School of Art, the L C C Central School of Arts and Crafts, and the Royal College of Art. A member of the Council for Art and Industry, he was appointed in 1940 a member of the Artists' Advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Kenneth Clark to advise the Ministry of Information on the selection of artists to record the war. As teacher and administrator Jowett did much to bring the art schools into closer touch with industry. He believed in widening the artistic susceptibilities of the young, and at the same time instituted workshops for the practical application of industrial processes.

John Alexander Milne

John Alexander Milne, who died on March 5, did much during his long life to promote the cause of art in industry. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 1923, and busied himself with the annual competition of industrial designs. In 1932 Milne was elected chairman of the society, and the cause of industrial design thus became one of the main objectives of the R S A. The Exhibition of British Art in Industry which opened in 1935 at Burlington House in association with the Royal Academy was largely due to Milne's influence, and the exhibition was one of the causes of the Government's decision to set up the Council for Art and Industry, of which the CoID is the successor. The letters 'R D I' after a designer's name – meaning 'Designer for Industry of the Royal Society of Arts' – are also an innovation of Milne's. His work in the cause of good design earned him the gold Albert Medal of the R S A in 1940, and in the last days of his life he was elected an honorary fellow of the Incorporated Institute of British Decorators and Interior Designers.

Herbert Charles Hiscock

Herbert Charles Hiscock, the man who brought new lights to old Chelsea, died on February 18 the day after his 57th birthday. He had been in ill health for some time but his death was unexpectedly sudden. Herbert Hiscock was one of the best known and liked figures in the electrical fittings trade. In business in Chelsea since 1929, he was a pioneer in contemporary lighting, and was considered by many to be ten years ahead of his time in his designs. He introduced embossed nylon tape for lampshades and one of his last designs was the 'Cedar Ray' shade. In the first world war he joined up at 16 and left the army with the rank of captain in the Worcestershire Regiment. He had lived in Scandinavia for some years before starting business in Chelsea, had travelled extensively in Europe, and was a connoisseur of good food and wine and an accomplished linguist.

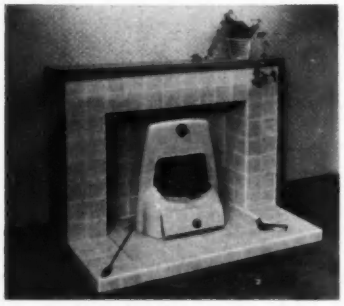
F. Lampl

F. Lampl, author and director of Orplid Glass Ltd, died on March 5. His Orplid-glasses and glass jewellery were to be seen at every representative exhibition of British craftsmanship, and many of his designs have been accepted by the CoID for 'Design Review'. A feature on Lampl's work will appear shortly.

LETTERS

'The place of the fire'

SIR: The opening paragraph of A. C. Hazel's letter published in DESIGN February page 52, suggested that the ordinary open fireplace should be replaced by a recess. I presume Mr Hazel actually meant to use the phrase 'open fire' instead of 'open fireplace', as I consider that properly and specially designed fireplaces are both technically and aesthetically suitable for free-standing open fires of the 'Hurdapta' type, and I am enclosing a photograph of a fireplace incorporating a wide and deep recess which I designed at Mr Hazel's request to suit the 'Hurdapta' fire. I hope it will prove my point.



E. R. KITCHING
Director
Broad & Co Ltd
4 South Wharf
Paddington
London W2

'British cars must do better'

SIR: In asking why, in his opinion, the body designs of so many British cars appear tasteless and out of date, Mr Hugh-Jones suggests (DESIGN February page 53) that it may be due to the fact that the ideas of too many draughtsmen and directors are unsuccessfully incorporated in any one design. Also, that the resultant model invariably excludes the latest American features because of the fear of novelty.

A lack of integration is certainly responsible for most of the tasteless designs but mainly for another reason. In an effort to satisfy both an export market, which has been largely brought up with American cars, and a home market which favours the more traditional appearance, many British car manufacturers have attempted unsuccessfully to combine two entirely different flavours. The most obvious example of this is the unhappy result obtained by many designers when combining a traditional, vertical radiator with an otherwise modern body. We can be original without being flamboyant and individual without being outrageous. We are also good engineers – despite our fear of novelty. Therefore, we ought to be able to create body designs which are good functionally and aesthetically. To my mind the Aston Martin, Bristol, Morris Minor and M G sports cars, to name but four, have managed this quite successfully.

If British designs appear without some of the latest American and Continental features the main reason, apart from our national reticence, is that *we* may not find them wholly practical. Mr Hugh-Jones cites the full-width rear window. Although this feature has many undeniable advantages, and is in my opinion bound to be generally adopted sooner or later, it has been pointed out that it does create a number of disadvantages; too much headlight glare from following motorists at night, a lowering of structural strength due to smaller roof support and less privacy for passengers are among the criticisms. I cannot agree with Mr Hugh-Jones's inference that the average American design is more tasteful than its British counterpart. It is, perhaps, more homogeneous, better balanced, more pleasing in basic shape, but it is invariably marred by overstatement and unnecessary detail. It must also be remembered that to design a body for a large chassis is an easier problem than designing one for a small chassis. Although we can learn much from foreign designs, what we have to do is to give expression to *our* interpretation of *our* problems and needs. What we lack is not taste and skill but the desire to remove the present tendency to compromise.

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BOOKS

The Book of Wallpaper, *E. A. Entwisle, Arthur Barker,* 30s

This is an absorbing study of the origins and growth of one of the most important elements in interior decoration. It is written by a man who not only knows but loves his subject, for E. A. Entwisle, a director of the Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd, has spent most of his life among wallpapers. Unlike many who are deeply interested in the past he has an enthusiasm for modern design which is reflected in the high standard of many of the papers produced by his company since the war. Mr Entwisle describes the discovery of the earliest known wallpaper at Christ's College, Cambridge, made in 1509, and goes on to discuss the influences and developments which have affected popular taste in design over the succeeding 400 years. The accounts of the early paperhanging makers, the invention of flocked papers as 'counterfeit damask', the influence of the leather gilders, the enormous increase in the popularity of wallpapers during the nineteenth century – all make absorbing reading and will supply many with valuable information, for there is little readily available literature on wallpaper history.

In the section on the twentieth century, however, there is a note of complacency which makes this chapter less convincing than the rest of the book. In attempting to refute the theory that there is a revival of interest in wallpapers today, Mr Entwisle states that production and employment figures show that there was not in fact a decline in the popularity of wallpapers between the wars. This may well be so, but it does not take into account the fact that the standard of popular taste during that period was at a particularly low ebb and that there were few outstanding designs to give a lead. The pioneers of the Modern Movement in their search for functional simplicity had no place for patterned surfaces. With no example to follow, manufacturers had to fall back on textured papers, on imitations of past styles, or on the cubist patterns which Mr Entwisle so rightly condemns. If, as Mr Entwisle argues, there has been no revival of wallpapers as such (because there has never been a decline) then there has certainly been a revival of good design which, through the production of cheap mass produced papers, has made its appeal to much wider sections of the population than before the war. And if, as Mr Entwisle states, wallpapers are now being used for public buildings where before the war paint or distemper would have sufficed, surely it is because the architects and designers could find little to appeal to them among pre-war productions. Even so, in spite of the brighter, bolder patterns which have appeared recently, a comparison of illustrations in this book shows only too clearly that there is a long way to go before modern wallpapers can rival the imaginative and sensitively drawn patterns of Morris or Walter Crane. The book has an introduction by Sacheverell Sitwell. J.E.B.

Designing for Industry, *F. C. Ashford, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd,* 27s 6d

This is a book of great value to all those intending to become industrial design consultants and, indeed, is full of useful information for those already in practice. It is the first book of its kind by an English consultant and faithfully describes his place in modern industry, at the same time giving an accurate idea of what is expected of him. It deals with every aspect of design from aesthetics to marketing considerations, including visualisation, drafting, rendering, perspective, model making and much invaluable information on materials and finishes. It includes most of the more widely used methods of manufacture, which are discussed and explained by diagrams. There is also included a brave attempt to give some 'dos' and 'don'ts', many of which are known and used instinctively by the experienced designer, but who is usually unable to give any intelligible reason for their incorporation in his design; and when one is dealing with engineers clear explanations are far better than aesthetic platitudes. The carefully selected bibliography is an excellent guide, although I think that one book or periodical dealing with modern architecture might have been included, as the more progressive work is a constant source of inspiration for designers whose products are always seen in relation to interior design or architectural settings. I was very pleased to find that Mr Ashford separates product

Presentation box

The new Distrene 100X *Presentation Box is made from polystyrene, a plastics material that has been increasingly used during the last few years. British Resin Products Ltd, which manufactures polystyrene as well as a number of other plastics materials, selected* 24 *opaque, translucent, and transparent colours from which a customer can make his choice at a glance.*

design from other branches of the profession. Designing for industry is a specialised sphere in its own right, and many critics judge products by aesthetic standards prevailing in other more craft based trades, without making due allowance for the many restrictions imposed upon the designer. He rightly reminds us that in this country, unlike the United States, the designer only too frequently has to incorporate parts or mechanisms for which the tools or stocks of parts already exist; and to be given an entirely free hand is a very rare event. The chapter on practice, one suspects, might be a bit of 'padding', and deals with office requirements and routine. Much of it is helpful, but it seems to me that the industrial designer who lacks sufficient intelligence to plan his own office would be more happily employed as a night watchman. In any event, as Mr Ashford admits, it all depends on capital; and it is more than likely that the consultant will begin operations from his own home.

The case history of the table egg cooker is a useful guide and covers all the necessary facets and complexities of designing a comparatively simple product, although, in my experience, the occasions when a consultant designer is called upon to invent are very rare, bearing in mind that most manufacturers carry staffs of engineers and specialist development teams, who establish a principle before the consultant designer is called in. I mention this because the would-be industrial designer might well be deterred by the prospect of having to advise his client on how to solve technical problems, which are normally not his responsibility. The book contains a number of illustrations in half-tone (two in colour) of a wide variety of products. It is regrettable that these could not all have been on art paper because they lose much of the crispness and precision we have come to expect of illustrations of industrial design. JOHN BARNES

Alvar Aalto and Finnish Architecture, *Eduard and Claudia Neuenschwander, The Architectural Press, London,* 50s

On one of Alvar Aalto's visits to England I was privileged to meet him. It was in the 'thirties at the house of P. Morton Shand, and Aalto showed friendly interest in the problems Amyas Connell and I were having: (local authorities did not like our reinforced concrete houses and were going to some lengths to stop them being built). But I remember above all the warmth of Aalto's personality, his kindliness and humour. When, after the war, he came to England to have conferred on him the Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Art, I again experienced those qualities of character. He showed spontaneous and natural pleasure when, in a foreign land and in the rather formal surroundings of an academic occasion, he saw faces he knew. Having had some contact with Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and Aalto, I cannot help thinking that Aalto approaches his architectural problems with a greater humility and a closer feeling for people than do the other two distinguished figures in the architecture of our time.

The authors of 'Alvar Aalto and Finnish Architecture' refer to the qualities of the Finnish people, to their 'attitude of deep tolerance and mutual help', to the 'authentic pioneer spirit' of a nation having to survive in a severe climate, and to Finnish culture broadly based on a peasant population. "The educated man . . . is still the magician and creator . . . supported by the active interest of the people." This is interesting, for we can make a comparison between the people's patronage in this Northern European democracy, and the people's patronage in Western Europe. With the latter, the educated man suffers from the patronage of Ortega's mass-man who, historically speaking, has suddenly appeared on the social scene, a vertical invader, knowing little about the architect and respecting him less, knowing little about art but knowing what he likes. Finland, like other European countries, has endured the invasions of Western classicism in the eighteenth century and *l'art nouveau* of the beginning of our century. But she is fortunate that these invasions had little effect on Finnish art and life. The Neuenschwanders' references to these aspects are useful to the student of history, as are their notes on that other great architect, the Finnish-American Eliel Saarinen.

If it were not for the style of its publication, the one or two contributions by other writers – confusingly slipped in with the other text – and the good illustrations which include architectural drawings of interest, one might suspect that Eduard and Claudia Neuenschwander's book had grown out of a thesis by them as students. I am not a critic of authorship or of the use of language, particularly of foreign language (personally I dislike having to look for the sections in English in a book written in various languages), but the purple passages that abound in the general text of the book offend me. "The plastic profiles and sensitive ornaments of the rough flaming granite and the smooth, dark copper express the essence of their material structure and at the same time enforce the plastic significance of the whole." The contributions by Mag Kaarlo Olsonen on the Finnish Bath House and by the architect Paul Bernoulli on Planning are different. They provide some exact descriptions and some facts. The principal authors would have done better if they had not raved so much and had left more to the imagination and intelligence of what, after all, must be a relatively small reading public, the educated man interested in architecture. It is a pity that there are some misprints.

Alvar Aalto is a significant figure, important to progress in our day. As a man, he seems to see architecture as an individual and social need, and not as a medium for cutting a dash. Like great architects in all periods he has an innate sense of structure, a feeling for materials and an understanding of the economics of building in relation to the needs of his community. His is a very considerable contribution to twentieth-century architecture. A book on his life and work would be valuable. The Neuenschwanders' book does not pretend to be an exhaustive work on Aalto or on Finnish architecture, but if it had gone somewhat further and produced more of Aalto's earlier work, together with some biographical information, and if it had been made more readable, the publishers' note that it is a unique document and a standard work for every architect would perhaps be justified, as would the price. BASIL WARD

British Plastics Year Book 1955, *A Classified Guide to the Plastics Industry, 25th edition, Iliffe and Sons Ltd,* 30s

The 1955 edition of British Plastics Year Book has been revised and extended to 652 pages. It is divided into nine sections, three of which are devoted to classified lists of manufacturers and suppliers of materials, finished products and equipment. Another section contains a list of trade and proprietary names connected with the plastics industry, and covers materials as well as finished products. Each trade name is followed by a definition of the product, the manufacturer concerned, and, where the manufacturer is overseas, the country of origin. A glossary of technical terms used in plastics is again included in this section. The names and addresses of nearly 4,000 firms associated with plastics are grouped into countries in the names and addresses section, and the 'Who's Who' section lists names and positions of prominent people in Britain's plastics industry. One of the most important features in the Year Book is the annual review of plastics patents. This section of 139 pages contains all relevant patents issued last year and they are collected, abstracted and arranged in subject groups. A list of new plastics companies registered during 1954 providing details of the official date of registration, address, activities, capital and directors is included and also a general index giving reference to any product or subject in the book. R.R.

American Textiles, *Paul T. Frankl, Leigh-on-Sea, F. Lewis, Publishers, Ltd,* 105s

This book is one of a series presenting a survey of the world's textiles, each country being dealt with in a separate volume. Few countries have progressed as quickly during recent years, either in design or in production techniques, as the United States, and considering the wide field this book covers, the selection is good, showing typical examples of the great variety of styles current in the U S A. The plates are excellent, though presented in a somewhat formal and stolid format. The manufacturers, designers and very brief descriptions of each textile are listed in the front of the book, but one cannot help wishing that for ease of reference these details had instead been given on the same page as the photograph to which they refer.

Apart from the very short introduction dealing largely with the influence of modern materials, the book consists entirely of photographs. This is perhaps all one requires, but considering the remarkably virile characteristics of modern American textiles, some analysis of the aesthetics would have been interesting. One suspects, for instance, that for artists like Miro and Calder, the universality of modern architecture and the general tempo of modern American city life have been vital influences.

Some indication of the dates of these productions would also have been useful. However, most of the photographs are eloquent of the high design standard of the fabrics, especially perhaps the woven examples, some of which use synthetic materials such as Dynel and Saran, which even through the medium of the monochrome photograph look excitingly rich and interesting.

I feel, for the sake of the designers concerned, it is worth mentioning an error in figures 33 and 34. These two illustrations have been reversed, and it is the printed fabric in the lower photograph that is by Angelo Testa. LUCIENNE DAY

Colour and Pattern in the Home, *Noel Carrington, Batsford,* 30s

Those who want to translate their own ideas into decorative schemes rather than play safe with conventional settings, will find much practical good sense in this book. It should not only help them to avoid many of the blunders which are costly to put right, but will also provide plenty of encouragement to the adventurous. The text teems with suggestions without any attempt to beat the *avant-garde* designers to the post. Mr Carrington cedes a place to sentiment and tackles the pressing problem of blending styles. As he points out, furnishing is for most of us a process of organic growth rather than the result of a single moment of inspiration.

He claims to have avoided anything so clever and eye-catching that it becomes tiresome, and the text bears this out; but a glance at the colour illustrations might make the reader wonder. The problem of accurate illustrations is endemic to those who write about colour. Here many, but not all, the colour plates make pretty pictures, but as illustrations of the text they are less happy. They are five-colour lithographs,

stimulating but often hardly applicable, and sometimes tiresome. These colours, although they reflect something of the author's verve, are stretched beyond their limitations; thus the same colour combination is first described as khaki green and then as mustard yellow in the same picture. One would not expect swatches, but something more apt and less bracing would have been welcome. J.N.W.

English Furniture at a Glance, *Barbara Jones, The Architectural Press, London,* 8s 6d

The breadth and variety in small books on English furniture history are rarely greater than the words contained within their titles. The only marked difference during recent years, compared with those earlier in the century, is in the acceptance of the fact that there is something worth saying about furniture after 1830. Miss Jones, as we might have guessed, has helped to fill this Victorian-Edwardian gap in four of the sixteen chapters of her book. They are written with a warmth and understanding which we have come to expect from her 'black eyes and Osbourne' vision. How one wishes there was space for more!

Her 'glances' at other periods and styles lack the personal approach, but when it does occur it misleads. This applies in the drawings as well as the text. Does the spider-web delicacy of Robert Adam really look as cobwebby as the illustration on page 41 suggests? Were 'bentwood members' of Windsor chairs ever made of elm? Should a Commonwealth chair have a swept-back leg? The compressing of the whole of English furniture into a short history of value to students means a concentration on the rules, rather than on the exceptions and their accurate interpretation.

DENNIS YOUNG

BS 2513, 1954: Dimensions of Wooden Desks and Tables for Office Use, *British Standards Institution,* 2s 6d

This standard is weakest from the viewpoint of the sitter, and has apparently been drafted independently and in advance of the standard for chairs. The minimum height of working surface for a desk is given as 28 inches and is suitable for existing chairs of 18 inches. There is, however, a movement, based on anthropometric research, for lower chairs which this standard will seriously impede. The dimensions for a typist's desk, giving 28 inches as a *maximum* and leaving the minimum open, are less restricting.

The minimum of 23 inches for kneehole height was probably chosen so that a kneehole drawer can be accommodated. This would result in an exceptionally tight fit for the sitter. With human beings proportioned as they are, comfort cannot be combined with the storage of papers over the knees.

The dimensions for drawers, all minimum, will ensure that most of the common cards and files will fit in one direction or another, and are a useful guide and protection. Various widths of top are standardised but all the depths are minimum so that economy in manufacture by limitation of models will not necessarily be promoted. It is to be hoped that this standard will not be linked in any way with standards for quality and construction which are now under consideration. BRIGID O'DONOVAN

Corrections

DESIGN February page 54: It should have been stated that the English distributor of 'Pubblicità in Italia' is Alec Tiranti Ltd.

The chair designed by Ian Henderson which is illustrated in DESIGN March page 26, was made by Beresford & Hicks. This firm is the maker of Ian Henderson upholstery designs.

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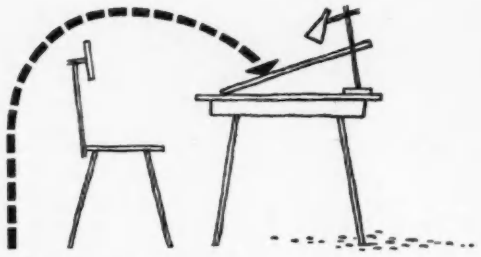

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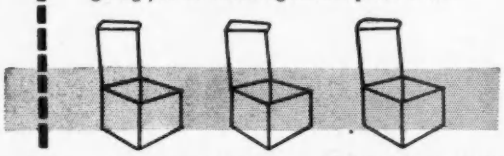

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